THE FATHER'S GONE GLOBAL

EXPLORING GOD'S HEART

Steve H Hakes

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The Father's Gone Global

Exploring God's Heart

~

Steve H Hakes

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Eternal thanks to the father for his unspeakable love.
By grace he permits me to seek to please him.

CONTENTS

Ch. 1	**Father of Creation**	**12**
	The cosmic father	12
	Life is from God	12
	Spiritual levels of life	15
	The global father	17
	A new creation in sight	20
Ch. 2	**Father of Sinai**	**23**
Ch. 3	**Searching for a Father**	**29**
	Looking beyond a brother	29
	Trinitarian's summit	34
Ch. 4	**Finding the Father**	**38**
	The heartfelt Abba	38
	The spirit points to abba	42
Ch. 5	**The Son Sees the Father**	**47**
	God's fatherhood is biblical and messianic	47
	We see the father's plan through his son	53
Ch. 6	**The Father Sees the Son**	**61**
	Jesus has always known his father	61
	The father and spirit have shown us the son	69
	Filial dependency on the father	72
	The father spoke through events	73
	The father spoke through prayer	76
Ch. 7	**See the Father and the Son**	**77**
	A balanced Christology	77
	Inspiration within incarnation	82
	Jesus led by the spirit	87
	The son's beyondness	91
	The church and God's son	93
	The obedient son	105
Ch. 8	**See the Trinity and the Cross**	**109**
	The trinity and the atonement	109

	Obedience and atonement	111
	Atonement from/by/to deity	115
	The father's sacrifice	118
Ch. 9	**Our Father's Inheritors**	**123**
	Deathless and derivative inheritance	123
	New life	126
	New land	129
	New kingdom	132
	Confused yet cosmic and confident kids	150
Ch. 10	**Our Father's Will**	**156**
	Obedience: response to grace by grace	156
	Obedience: to and by the father	158
	Obedience: self-centred to Christ-centred	161
	Grace: its initiative	166
Ch. 11	**Our Father's Supremacy**	**175**
	Our father; my father	175
	Our father in church and closet	176
	Our father; not the world's	176
	Requests to the father	182
	Requests through the son	184
	Requests in/by the spirit	185
Ch. 12	**Our Father's World**	**187**
	Hope of the church	187
	Light of the church	189
	Voice of the church	190
	The ultimate father	192
Ch. 13	**Our Father's Eschatology**	**201**
	Eschatological children	201
	Our father in heaven	204
	Heaven here I come	207

Biblical Abbreviations

Ac. *Acts*	Is. *Isaiah*	Nb. *Numbers*
Am. *Amos*	Jas. *James*	Neh. *Nehemiah*
Chr. *Chronicles*	Jg. *Judges*	Ob. *Obadiah*
Col. *Colossians*	Jhn. *John*	Phm. *Philemon*
Cor. *Corinthians*	Jl. *Joel*	Php. *Philippians*
Dan. *Daniel*	Jnh. *Jonah*	Pr. *Proverbs*
Dt. *Deuteronomy*	*Job Job*	Ps(s). *Psalm*(*s*)
Ec. *Ecclesiastes*	Jos. *Joshua*	Pt. *Peter*
Eph. *Ephesians*	Jr. *Jeremiah*	Rm. *Romans*
Est. *Esther*	*Jude Jude*	*Ruth Ruth*
Ex. *Exodus*	Kg. *Kings*	Rv. *Revelation*
Ezk. *Ezekiel*	Lk. *Luke*	Sam. *Samuel*
Ezr. *Ezra*	Lm. *Lamentations*	Sg. *Song of Songs*
Gal. *Galatians*	Lv. *Leviticus*	Ths. *Thessalonians*
Gen. *Genesis*	Mic. *Micah*	Tm. *Timothy*
Hab. *Habakkuk*	Mk. *Mark*	Tts. *Titus*
Heb. *Hebrews*	Ml. *Malachi*	Zc. *Zechariah*
Hg. *Haggai*	Mt. *Matthew*	Zp. *Zephaniah*
Hos. *Hosea*	Nah. *Nahum*	

Grades[1]

Percent	**100-95**	**94-90**	**89-85**	**84-80**	**79-75**	**74-70**	**69-65**	
Letter	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	
Point	4.3	4	3.7	3.3	3	2.7	2.3	
Percent	**64-60**	**59-55**	**54-50**	**49-45**	**44-40**	**39-27**	**26-14**	**13-00**
Letter	C	C-	D+	D	D-	U+	U	U-
Point	2	1.7	1.3	1	0.7	0	0	0

[1] For handier sorting in tables, I advise using A1/A2/A3 and B1/B2/B3, etc, for grade letters. I have put these here in the more familiar forms of, eg, A+/A/A- and B+/B/B-. For grade points, I round final totals to the nearest 0.5 points.

Preface

In *Mansfield Park*, we could consider Fanny Price's genetical father, a low class-centred naval alcoholic. We could also consider her adoptive father, her uncle Sir Thomas Bertram, a benevolent stately but distant, father-figure. The former had little time for his children; the latter did but, unable to rely on his wife for childrearing, relied unwisely on his sister-in-law, Mrs Norris, eldest of the three Ward sisters, whose suppression of Fanny bordered on child-abuse. Both fathers nevertheless had a child or so who turned out well.

God, beyond creation and biology, is not married. He is our source of marriage. And he, not fallible fathers, is to be our supreme pattern of fatherhood, and parenting in general, his expertise not of experience but of creator. In considering him especially in relationship to his eternal son—who as noncarnate has no mother—and considering the ways in which God is father to and within, both creation and covenant, we can better see true fathering and mothering, and our filial roles within and above our world, and worship the way we should. Is the father your father?

For Bible texts, my main English versions (MEVV) are the CEB/CEV/ERV/LEB/NABRE/NCV/NIV/NKJV/NLT/NRSV. For grading, the best will be A+, and the worst D-: none shall fail. In quotes, I often amend [the LORD] to [Yahweh], and remove false capitals from nouns and pronouns. I sometimes take liberties when quoting generally: for example, updating gender style, adjusting tenses, standardising abbreviations, and simplifying bibliographies intext.

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Prologue

"[God] the father...is the source of all authority and lordship" (Smail 16).

We can ignore him by preferring a brother figure (God the son) to a father figure (God the father), or even a vaguer figure to excite us or to squeeze into our mould (God the spirit). At the psychological level, we can shy away from God as father if corrupt fatherhood is a psychological problem for us. So what's wrong with human fathers?

Shamefully there is physical and sometimes fatal abuse of children by men. It's seldom by husband-fathers: "the differential risk factors which we have noted between the categories of married and cohabiting parents, between step-parents and unmarried cohabitees, suggest that marriage is, in itself, a protective factor for children. The most obvious explanation is that a married couple have made a commitment to each other, which the cohabiting couple have not. Cohabitees stay together for as long as it suits both parties; married couples have promised to stay together for life. They have made a commitment before their families and before the community which anticipates support from within the family and from the community at large in sustaining their relationship when things become difficult."[2]

But abuse can be by husband-fathers, and even by wife-mothers. Whelan's report links such abuse as mainly from men—howbeit in contractual relationships—and, though very appreciably less, still doable by natural fathers within the married family unit. Abuse can even be by absence (Williams ch.38).

It would be interesting to examine what stresses and strains within marriage are behind such, and whether wavering spousal commitments increase such abuse. For instance, are adulterous husband-fathers more likely to be less kind to family child/children, than non-adulterous husband-fathers would be? But enough to say that we are all a mixture of good and evil, even within the moderating commitment of marriage: "Well then: if you know how to

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[2] Whelan 34. He defined marriage as being legally created. I define marriage as covenantal, so would allow that legally defined cohabitation could include some who are married though not legally registered as married.

give good gifts to your children, evil as you are, how much more will your father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (NTE: Mt.7:11). Let us not model God the father on flawed human fatherhood, but model human fatherhood on God the father.

On gender, often men are more thing-ish, and women more people-ish. And "mothers tend to promote the fulfilment of their children from behind; fathers tend to require the obedience of their children from above" (Smail 12). It is tyrants who seek fulfilment without being obedient; our true humanity comes out through true obedience. Let us not shy away from God as father. Nor let us try to squeeze deity into our mould, into psychological ideas of what we would like. That's the nice idea that deity is more like a genie who will shape himself to our whims, rather than will shape us into his bottle, shape us into the truth. If he is our comfort, he is also our discomfort.

Our preferred theology can be 'bottom-up' not 'top-down', evolutionary rather than incarnational, subjective instead of objective. This has some merit, in that Scripture itself applies human pictures to help us look from where we are to what is beyond. Natural theology can be a philosophical road that points from nature to supernature. But 'bottom-up' theology can mislead us into assuming that deity is merely a magnification of the corrupted image—isn't that, er, Satan?—and underplays the challenge to be conformed into deity's uncorrupted image. It devalues revelation.

God the father—my focus—is the unattainable ideal to which all human fathers should strive, but he is ultimately beyond all human illustrations. Yet, to help, he has given us illustrations, handles, to journey into a good relationship with him. But we being born blind can grasp form, but not colour. We see but in part, but in that part let us see that God the father is our highest family and authority.

Authority itself can cause reluctance to know him, for he opposes our pride, challenging obedience and re-evaluation of our lives. How many of us can hand on heart rejoice with the eldila that to God they are "not more needful to him than a grain of the dust…all needless alike…infinitely superfluous…" (Lewis 1971:201)? And that is what we are, whatever pride might teach.

"See how very much our father loves us, for he calls us his children,
and that is what we are!" (NLT: 1 Jhn.3:1a)

Chapter 1

Father of Creation

The cosmic father

I begin with a bigger picture. Much mythology has been based on the idea of spiritual councils, often of stand-offs between good and evil never-human spirits. One finds such in the *Music of the Ainur* (J R R Tolkien), and of the global overseers, the oyéresu, in the Ransom Trilogy (C S Lewis). They in turn looked to ancient myths. In my own fantasy writings, I have taken God the trinity to alone be the uncreated, and angels fallen and unfallen to predate humanity, with three ranks both sides of their divide: planetary (*oyéresu*); regional (on Earth), and spec ops or province based tertiary helpers, foot soldiers, either lesser angels (unfallen) or demons (fallen).

If Christians, we often speak less of angels than of God. But is it possible that God has established representation through a network of angels of various ranks, besides sometimes acting directly? Michael Heiser is one of many who sought to expand our view of the unseen realm. I do not uncritically recommend his reasonings or his conclusions, though I recommend expanding our sight—biblically. But yes, *bene elohim* (children of God), sang as heavenly stars before man's creation, if we are to accept the witness of *Job* 38:7.

On the one hand, I suspect that Heiser failed to sufficiently see that the meaning of *bene elohim* can extend *below* immortal children. On the other hand, I suspect that many fail to see that the meaning of *bene elohim* can extend *above* mortal children. But in this book, my focus is on God's children's mortal to immortal path.

Life is from God

I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Howbeit in the polytheist style of our past, according to James White "a god who is not the creator is not worthy of our worship and adoration" (White 105). Actually, no *god* is. As a monotheist, I believe

that ultimately, the idea of there being non-creator deities, indeed of there being any deities—God alone is deity—will perish (Jr.10:11).

Of course if God is not creator, why offer him supreme worship and love? Some are happy enough with the idea that deity is itself something created by the universe—may The Force be with you—as if randomly alongside biological life, a twin sister phenomenon? Atheism does not find the concept of created deity, as created nonhuman intelligence, as threatening as deity being creator. Atheism typically even denies that the concept, God, has any existence beyond our imagination—why obey our image? Why even obey morality if merely created in our image?

Before looking for spiritual fatherhood, let us first consider God as father to universal creation, including to the biosphere, and dab at least a metaphorical finger into some philosophy and science.

For its part, Scripture says that all humanity is in God's image. Murder is thus immoral, even if between different peoples or tribes (Gen.9:6). Not all agree. For instance, logically, atheism cannot justify ruling murder to be immoral in itself, since atheism is built on mindlessness, randomness, and can neither logically approve logic as absolute, nor morality as absolute (see C S Lewis' *Miracles*). Its sway is one reason why some reject truth as being absolute, objective.

Cutting off commitment to the concept, God as sovereign, frees unto autonomy: "the first and only command of atheism is *Do what thou wilt*" (Peter Hitchens). Felix Tholomyès believed that and laughingly dumped Fantine: "Fantine joined in the laughter; but when, an hour later, she was back in her room she wept bitterly. It was her first love, as we have said. She had given herself to Tholomyès as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child" (Hugo 143).

So, who's left carrying the baby? To atheism it does not matter. What Hitler wilt was mass extermination. To atheism it did not matter. Atheism, the amoral unaccountability of meaninglessness, can be superficially attractive to the will, but it pictures automatons clashing with one another, all under no transcendent baton, under no objective idea of good and evil, no idea of meaningfulness—mindless humanity living and dying by tooth and claw. But by granting theism as ultimate, we can grant logic and morality to be absolutes, to stem from the absolute, and grant that reason is a

global feature within humanity, reflecting God's image. Theism alone allows for moral decisions: the good of the other; the good of posterity; the good of the planet. Theism validates reason.

But rationally, it's not a case of picking a preferred option to believe in—that's irrational. "It is often asserted in modem England that the world must return to Christian ethics in order to preserve civilization, or even in order to save the human species from destruction. It is sometimes asserted in reply that Christian ethics have been the greatest obstacle to human progress and that we must take care never to return to a bondage from which we have at last so fortunately escaped. I will not weary you with a repetition of the common arguments by which either view could be supported.... The whole debate between those who demand and those who deprecate a return to Christian ethics, seems to me to involve presuppositions which I cannot allow. The question between the contending parties has been wrongly put" (Lewis 1981:44).

In short, Lewis argued, the primary question is whether ethics is objective or subjective, not whether we prefer this or that system or emphasis, of ethics. And whether we prefer Atheism or Christianity, the prime question is, *Is either correct?*

I believe that Christianity is correct. The link of God's image in humanity, is to humanity as his spiritual offspring within creation. Spiritual, in that God is not a biological, sexual, being: he is the eternal spirit, creator of atomic material/systems, and the source of universal genders. Incidental to how we construe them, *Genesis* speaks of Adam/Eve as having been God's image on earth (Gen.1:26-7). Descendants kept that identification (9:6). Indeed, when linking a birth line to Jesus, and seeking to highlight his global mission by going in jumps all the way back to Adam, Luke used υἱος/*huios*—a word for son—only once (Lk.3:23). Then he space-saved in giving a representative line in which the term *son* is unstated but assumed.

It's a bit like saying Z son of Y of X of W...of A, where A stands for God, and B stands for Adam, and each step is directly or indirectly, son to father. Thus, commonly and reasonably, we translate Adam as being related to God as son to father (Lk.3:38). No, it doesn't say that *literally*, but it implies that grammatically, and it says that effectively. However some translations such as the ESV, add the

definite article—*the*—definitely going beyond the evidence. For instance, Seth was not *the* son of Adam, but *a* son of Adam.[3]

It is with this idea of human oneness, shared parentage, that Paul could side with Greek philosopher-poets famed in Athens. Beginning on a pagan note of polytheism, he moved from their starting idea of many gods, to the iconoclastic idea that in fact there are no gods but God, the creational father/source: Plato held something similar. "The 'god' who made the world and everything in it, is the lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations.... [And] as some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'.... In the past God overlooked [spiritual] ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (NIV: Ac.17:24-30 slightly adjusted).

Spiritual levels of life

This basic awareness we humans—as defined by the biological Adamic line[4]—have of deity as creatorial, is what I call Level 1—or Common Level/Life—knowledge. Basic awareness of morality and spirituality comes within that package. Thus Paul said, that some knew God well enough to live better than they did, but deliberately ditched such knowledge of natural lifestyle, in favour of lawless lifestyle, and in turn were deliberately ditched by God (Rm.1:21,24).[5]

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3 Of the MEVV, on this I prefer the CEB/CEV/NRSV.

4 Does Adam, pictured poetically in *Genesis*, correlate to Homo Sapiens as a unique spiritual branch (imago dei)? I raise this point merely to show awareness of an issue of creation talk, yet I move on to reduce side-tracking. Personally, I have moved into Old Earthism (via Kevin Logan's *Responding to the Challenge of Evolution* (2002)), and since then from Intelligent Design into Intelligent Evolution (via Perry Marshall's *Evolution 2.0* (2015)). I presume that at some point, humanity entered the imago dei status, even as human beings can now enter the imago christi status. It is not my point to define the timing of the former, though I will define the timing of the latter.

5 Incidentally, rainbow-dressing cannot *make* homosexual practice, clean. It either is in itself clean, or is not clean, and we must get the answer from God.

Yet on the other hand, some sought to be guided by their inner light (natural law), and lived proper lives. And those guided by the torah—God's ethic-written light—were likewise divided between those who chose to live properly, and those who chose to live improperly (Rm.2:12-5). Conscience does not come with the Image of Christ, but comes with the Image of God, though in line with the theological overview of TULIP, hyper-Calvinism postulates unredeemed humanity as being totally evil without conscience.

A major point in *Romans* was that before the christ, whether you had only inner light (Common Level), or had inner plus written light (Sinai Level), some would be predisposed to obey, and some would be predisposed to disobey. But outside of messiah, even the best will in the world could not achieve the ideal lifestyle, and fell helplessly below God's glory. Indeed those who most sought to live aright, could feel the biggest failures (Rm.7:24).

In short, on particular counts, some strove against their inbuilt conscience—συνειδησις/*suneidēsis*—searing it, but others generally had healthy yet fallible consciences, which sometimes accused, sometimes excused, their moral choices. But ever since Adam, all have had inbuilt conscience, an indirect voice of God. On its fallibility, I think that people can make a right moral choice, but still be troubled by their conscience about that choice. "Was I right?" is a pitiful lament sometimes heard years after an event. Right or wrong, at least the conscience is painfully alive and not dead.

It's as well to observe that conscience is not a perfect science, as it is but an indirect voice of God. Individual consciences are not always in sync (1 Cor.10:29): God will judge me by my conscience, not by yours (Rm.14:5), though our consciences might rightly or wrongly align. Think of it as an inbuilt ethic's CPU or NPU, which, processing imperfect data and imperfect principles to draw conclusions, at least tries to get it right under God. Its results can improve through improved data and principles.

Even at Level 3—Christian life—which is in the 'last times' which began with Christianity, some will still sear their consciences (1 Tm.4:1-2), treating it as an enemy. Apostacy? Yes, "ex-Christians who had once rejoiced in their salvation and taken Holy Communion, had

reverted to their pagan way of life" (Kay and Moxon 134), having swallowed and followed deception.

The global father

Let's move on. The original act/process of creation, has often been put in storyform for what science has not yet fully fathomed, a picturing of ideas, truths. And what is science, but a slow unfolding of what God is responsible for—as to existence? The storyform highlights that behind the act of creation, deity was ultimately responsible, irrespective of how he was responsible.[6]

There is a creational fatherhood, which links all humanity, whether unborn, born, or, arguably, deceased. Nor is it confined to God the father. As far back as we can see, mankind has commonly sensed that there is a nonphysical identity that created—birthed—the world in which it lived, and masculine and feminine divinities were long named and worshipped. I would encourage the reading of such myths, and not initially as academic study, but as learning through fantasy, enjoying the shoes of great peoples often long forgotten.

Speak aloud of prayer-life in Ancient Egypt, and you can still hear echoes of the idea that religion evolved from predynastic Egyptian animism (spirits in inanimate/animate creatures), to polytheism (spirits over creatures), and that prayer was purely subjective. What Edward B Tylor in the 1860's dubbed *Animism*[7] (or Primal Religion) is said by some

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6 Perry Marshall's *Evolution 2.0*, explores the case that God front-loaded biological creation into a cell created with self-replication and evolving code. Did God likewise front-load the universe (see Flew)? "Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live" (NLT: Gen.3:20): humanity is implied. Eve, indirectly my mother via multitudes of mothers, in an ultimacy and human sense was my mother. God, in an ultimacy sense, was my creator, my source, creation's source. We should also recognise that ultimately he allows defiance, the option for corruption—Satan is evil by self-corruption, not by God's design.

7 Predating this 'level' is said to be animatism, assuming that humanity simply evolved from pre-simian life, life that presumably predated the concept,

to reflect a yet early stage of an evolution of religion. You might hear also the suggestion that perhaps the idea of post-mortem life began when some noticed the phenomenon of natural mummification, bodies having been remarkably preserved in hot sands or in ice.

Such ideas on the market are impossible to verify or falsify, since no literary evidence exists for preliterary times. The preliterary years are to us, very speculative times. But it has in fact been argued the other way, that an original monotheism fractured into polytheism, with the stormy wrath and the sunny blessing of one god, being split into the idea of a storm god and a sun god. Anthropologists speak of primitive tribes having "a memory of a 'high god', a benign creator-father-god" (Alexander 1994:31).

We can dig back well before the Egyptian Empire, into Sumerian and Arratan societies, and find much devotion to that which is beyond creation, and yet encroaches into it. A fear of unkind spirits often went hand in hand with a love for kind spirits, indeed for what nowadays is the idea of many deities (polytheism), or many divinities (polytheiism). The Roman Empire distinguished between deities and divinities, the latter a useful distinction of beings of lesser type.

And since I believe that, in a trinitarian sense, God is *not* a god—*not* a deity—but is societal deity itself, in my opinion to speak at most of so-called deities as divinities (or aspects of deity), helps keep the clear blue water of distinction, yet water that is beclouded even in biblical literature. As a matter of fact, I hate Muslims speaking about 'the Christian god', and Christians talking about 'the Muslim god'. Both sides know that there is no god but God, so why speak as foolish polytheists? Nor should we speak of 'the god of the Old Testament', as if we are muddled Marcionites. Yahweh alone is God. Anyway, as monotheists, let us look outside of Scripture a little bit more.

The ancient Greeks had ideas about a universal father, the πανπατηρ/ *panpatēr*, the 'god-father' of all other 'gods' and 'goddesses'. They

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deity, which is assumed to have been created by man's imagination. Animatism is the idea that a fearful indefinable force—like in *Star Wars*—lurks around about us, which animism identifies as individual entities (spirits) living in natural objects.

named him Zeus, husband to Hēra. In fact, even Zeus had antecedent, and 'father' did not always mean generative father. At times Zeus 'married' earthly women (ιεροι γαμοι/*hieroi gamoi* = holy marriages): that is, spirit could encode human DNA and trigger conception. One such offspring was Hēra-klēs (a.k.a. Hercules).

But by and large, divine fertilisation was deemed to be more limited to agriculture and climate, sky and soil. Though the myth was unscientific, it yet held some truth often lost, that God the father is ultimately—through design laws—behind fertility and the blessings of rain and harvest. Harvest Festivals can focus our minds on creational truth. Even if good or bad weather is not directly by his hand, the system is his via creation laws.[8]

Nations themselves, or simply any of their leaders, could self-identify as being the/a child of a deity. Some temples re-enacted the mystic union, as they perceived it to be, not always pleasing to biblical ears! Greek philosophers even realised that reason itself was from beyond nature, rational-seed (σπερμα-λογικον/*sperma-logikon*).

Sadly, some influential C19 Churchians of protestant origin, rewrote the Christian message by their reading of Greek mythology, suggesting that Christianity originated in Greek myth—anywhere but from God! C S Lewis countered by his realisation that myth was good yet fuzzy truth from God, but became focused, real, factual, only in Christ. But yes, there was some fire behind the Greek smoke, for has God not been partially perceived even by his pagan child?[9]

But too big a fire was supposed from that little pagan smoke, and the big Hebrew fire—since Abraham a separate fire, stoked by God's Sinai prophets—was largely ignored. We must read Hellenism and Hebraism within their own environments, before we examine any

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8 Analogically, we can indirectly thank God for good judicial verdicts, without logically blaming him for bad ones, by virtue of the fact that he has given humanity the understanding of virtue and rightness and justice—we make laws.

9 A general distinction is that paganity was spiritually preliterate, relying only on picture books, but Sinai was spiritually literate, direct revelation in written form. We must enter its mind to understand its mind.

overlap. The very fact that *abba* is an Aramaic word, from a sister language to Hebrew, not from the foreign Greek into which it was translated,[10] should bespeak its Hebrew ancestry. God was involved.

A new creation in sight

Let me say here, that though some may think them a needless complication, going into layers of distinction can help us to analyse and explain truth better. The lack of focus of cloudy talk, suggests theological fog. Thus, for instance, I speak of trinity. For deity is three persons, one society, one being, and to speak roughly of 'God' crucified, fails to differentiate the father and the spirit from the son—*they* were not crucified. Layers of distinction, trinitarianism.

Even to speak roughly of 'the son' crucified, could suggest that when he was on the cross, he wasn't in heaven! Dual Mode Kenoticism was insightful. I believe in a real incarnation, and of the eternal son as beyond space and time, not a creature which *at the same time* can only be in *either* heaven *or* on earth. Layers of distinction.

If we speak of Jesus as the *incarnation* of God the son, the son's now permanent mode in time and space, then we can see that the uncreated eternal son represented himself in time and space as mortal—deity is not mortal; Jesus was mortal. *Pace* Charles Wesley, it was not as immortal son but as mortal son, that God-the-son-as-Jesus, was crucified. It was not as mortal son that God's son cocreated, but as immortal son, the logos. Mortal hands were to cruel nails surrendered, but mortal hands did *not* fling stars into space, whatever Graham Kenrick's sermon, and we should not call Jesus our god. Layers of distinction, Graham, layers of distinction.

"The father created through the son (see Jhn.1:3; Col.1:15-6)" (Morris 123). God the son was involved (1 Cor.8:6). Bear in mind that the *incarnate name* of God-the-noncarnate-son, *Jesus*, was sometimes used for convenience and linkage, without the meaning that the incarnate son—*as* incarnate, *as* a flesh and blood being—was co-creator

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10 It has three mentions: Mk.14:36; Rm.8:15; Gal.4:6. The Letters, to non-Aramaic audiences, quote the established form, then translate into Greek (πατηρ/*patēr*), though as is often the case, something is lost in translation.

presumably even of his own flesh and blood. We might say that the ray did not create the sun, but that the sun created the ray. The named ray represented its immediate source—the sun on Earth.

Jhn.1:3 speaks of the noncarnate son. As Irenaeus taught, "through the incarnation the Logos became the historical Jesus" (Berkhof 65; Jhn.1:14), who represents God the son as a perfect ray from the sun represents the sun.[11] The CEV says that "Christ is exactly like God" (Col.1:15), but self-evidently his very position of christ (anointed) was distinct as anointed (human) from anointer (deity). If we see the human limitations of God's son *as Jesus*—needing food, sleep, lacking knowledge—we see that as such he was not "exactly like God". Stream from source; deific, not deity.

We must translate the meaning from the text. Consider "…the image of God the invisible one" (Wright 65). Rather than say that *Christ* is the eternally pre-existent creator of all things, it is fuller to say that God-the-son-noncarnate, who has incarnated himself as Christ, is the eternally trans-existent[12] co-creator of all things.[13] It is "not that the pre-existent one was already Jesus, the messiah, but that *the person we now know as Jesus, the messiah*, is to be identified as God's pre-existent agent" (Wright 69): same person; human mode. Does the spirit eternally anoint the noncarnate son?

Contra the KJV (Col.1:16), "'by him' is properly '*through* him'[, and] 'for him' is properly '[*un*]*to* him'" (Wright 73).[14] The former picks up both that God the son is co-creator in a sense of junior partner, the father

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11 C2 Irenaeus rightly contrasted the passible Jesus to the impassible son (*AH*: 4.7.2), but I prefer the terms, carnate son (christ Jesus) to noncarnate son.

12 Ideally, we should go beyond the prefix pre- (*before*), since [before] implies a-time-before-a-time. I suggest the prefix trans-, to convey *beyond* time.

13 Whatever else we might say about Peter De Rosa's book, *Jesus who became Christ* (1975), the title is interesting. But if anything, I would argue that the one born christ, was then named Jesus (Lk.2:11,21). I dismiss the idea that the church created the idea of Jesus being the christ, as an idea upon a peg, and was somehow uninterested in the historical Jesus.

14 IMO most English versions have gotten this wrong. The RV/ASV have been exceptions to the rule.

creating through him[15] [and by the spirit], and also distances Paul from the idea that creation is for the benefit of deity.

I grieve when requests to God end with the line, 'for Jesus' sake', rather than 'for our sakes', as if he cares only for himself. Orientation can be *unto* him *for* the sake of the orientated, not for the orientator. Creation was, from our perspective, a needless creative expression of deity's nature, somewhat like what C S Lewis pictured as a painting, which the painter neither needs nor is limited to, a work of art which the art itself, given life, can enjoy, a spreading of joy.[16]

The involvement of the spirit can also be seen with trinitarian glasses, from such as Gen.1:2, though the Old Testament was not written with trinitarian glasses. Nor was the primacy of God the father, thrashed out, so much as God being the father to creation.

But with the addition of incarnation, God the son set the stage for a new dimension of creation, a new genesis, a new humanity. A coming together is a new way, the ideas of God as creator, and God as father. Currently yet like a growing stem, this shall one day flower in terms of a new heaven and a new earth—all things shall be new.

"The creator exercises his lordship in his world with the ultimate aim of drawing all people[17] to his son, Jesus Christ—in whom alone is his fatherly love fully expressed and revealed—and of filling them with his spirit—in whom alone we relate to him as father and respond to him as children. In Christ, the father has opened his house universally to all humanity, but not all people have come into that relationship of trust and obedience which knowing his fatherhood involves. God's fatherhood in the New Testament is never to be understood naturally as a relationship in which we all already stand, but always christologically as something that can come to us and be received by us only in his son" (Smail 192).

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15 Likewise, Heb.1:2's δι ου/*di ou* (*through whom*).

16 Something of this is reflected elsewhere: "The earth and sky will end, but you will live forever! They will wear out like clothes, and like clothes, you will change them" ERV: Ps.102:26). I doubt that universal nihilism was meant.

17 For Jhn.12:32 I prefer the NKJV: all peoples, not all people. It's a global offer, not a total uptake.

Chapter 2

Father of Sinai

"When Israel was a boy, I loved him; and I called my son out of Egypt" (WYC: Hos.11:1). "You are the children of Yahweh your god…" (WEB: Dt.14:1).

The idea of God (as trinity) as creational father, and of God the father (among trinity),[18] has much biblical coverage. Having looked at a corporate fatherhood in which deity—father, son, and spirit—are the source of creation at large and humanity in particular, let us move on to the once undiscovered trinity, revealed in the name Yahweh, and revealed as father to the covenant people of Israel.[19]

Some deny that God as father/parent, has OT justification, perhaps unhappy with the fatherhood theme. But clearly, if there was a son, there was at least a father—*father* being a biblical picture and predominant focus among feminine pictures. Lack of a mother figure is to show that it was nonbiological generation. And some scriptures are quite clear about specific father/son nonbiological relationships (eg 1 Chr.28:6: Yahweh as spiritual father to Solomon, David's biological son).

Closest to the border might be Dt.32:6, but even there the full human line, from the moon-worshipper Terah and his wife, was known. Thus, this 'creation' was not from the dust of the earth, but

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[18] Besides creational fatherhood, we may speak of deific fatherhood as:
- Generative father (God the father) to the trinity
- Sinaitic father once upon a time to Ethnic Israel: God as father
- Messianic (a.k.a. Adoptive) father (God the father) to the church

[19] I use the most widely accepted form of God's name, though some suggest other forms of his name, based around the four known consonants, YHWH. Even as *adam* can be singular (the husband of Eve) or societal (the man and his wife = man[kind]: Gen.5:2), so the terms *God*, and *Yahweh*, can mean in some settings a singular person, and in other settings a societal trinity.

from the dust of human ancestry, by Yahweh's choice created to be his national-people.

Here I will forego talk of a mother figure—though noting that both masculine and feminine genders are linked to deity, although deity is neither male (man/boy) nor female (woman/girl). Male/female are biological sexes with their own biases towards nonbiological masculine and feminine genders/psyches.

Here I will pass over talk of a husband figure—though that picture is certainly biblical and helpful in discussing marriage fidelity and divorce, and the related issue of whether covenants (marriage being covenantal, not contractual), can biblically be annulled for gross violation (adultery by πορνεια/*porneia*) within marriage.

In OT times, certainly Yahweh was reticent about the fatherhood theme.[20] Yet that reticence was perhaps based on the pagan misuse of the term that implied some biological link between deity and humanity. Yahweh did not wish people misled by misusing a term. Perhaps similarly, Yeshua was reticent about the messiahship theme. Yet that reticence was perhaps based on the Jewish misuse of the term that implied some conflict-resolution between Rome and Israel. Yeshua did not wish people misled by misusing a term.

Yet Yahweh was creator to mankind and father to Israel. But at best that was a figurative designation, like *mother*. Ethnic Israel might say *God said*, or *Yahweh said*, but not *my father said*. Only through Jesus did that father connection became more individualised to rank and file—and more personal. Let's look at the OT texts.

Of Israel as Yahweh's son/sons

Ex.4:22-3: "There is something distinctly unusual about the death of the firstborn in *Exodus* that suggests it is more than merely a tit-for-tat punishment" (Alexander 2017:106). This comment is based on such as

[20] As someone put it, Yahweh was called father to Israel, 11 times in the whole 23,145 verses of the Old Testament. In contrast, the Fourth Gospel alone (879 verses) calls God *father* 122 times—and *God* only 83 times. And what an explosive contrast to the title *christ*, between the Gospels covering Christ before the cross, and the New Testament Letters covering Christ after the cross. Background hints can be like seeds awaiting their Spring.

the fact that Yahweh's firstborn son, meant in fact his chosen community, in which its people would die by his hand unless they flagged up allegiance by a certain token. Perhaps any Egyptian households who dared to flag up that token were likewise spared. Be that as it may be, premature death both causes tears on Earth, and transfers people into abeyance/judgement sooner rather than later, possibly giving them an easier death than might otherwise have been. And clearly Yahweh's firstborn was not a biological offspring, although Pharaoh's immediate firstborn was, and perhaps the term meant his people as his inheritor-son. Yahweh spoke as a father.[21]

Dt.14:1: This speaks not of a son or child, but about the chosen multigenerational people being Yahweh's children—"You are the children of Yahweh your god". Though the fatherhood theme was not too personal, it did flag up that each citizen was as a child among children to Yahweh, the community father, as 32:6 reinforced.

Is.1:2: The setting is after twelve-tribed Israel had fractured into two sections, Israel-proper (North), and Judah (South)—and in today's terms sometimes Jews fought Israelis. In one sense, one covenant united them. In another sense, both sides were as separate *sons*—in line with Ancient Near Eastern covenant language for a friendly covenant between unequals—with separate covenants.

Is.63:16-7: At one level, Abraham was their father, a term that could mean any father up the genetic line, but the bigger names were cited.[22] That Abraham did not know/recognise them, might have simply meant that he died before Judah's birth; possibly Israel—as the northern tribes—contended that Abraham's firstborn grandson, Reuben, should have inherited the leadership, and questioned the south's legitimacy. Be that as it may, Yudah acknowledged Yahweh as father.

Is.64:8-9: Similar to that above, Yahweh was covenant-father to Yudah, and Yudah was a covenant-people/son to him.

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21 White 111 makes a similar point, about Jesus as God's firstborn, *prōtotokos*.

22 Compare Jhn.8:39, whereas at a biological level true, at the spiritual level it was truer to trace them to the devil (42,44; 17:12).

Jr.3:1-20: This section mixes in the metaphors of wife of Yahweh and child of Yahweh (12,14,19,20)—both are covenant metaphors. It spoke in terms of strong ritual defilement, which could result after a biblically tolerated but disapproved ground of divorce, which ritually precluded the former covenant from being reinstituted (1). How much less tolerable to remarry Israel after her prostitution?

Israel was worse than a victim-wife. Yahweh had been the victim-husband, for Israel had grossly violated its covenant, like an adulterous-wife. Yahweh expressed amazement that, after such disloyalty, exiled/divorced Israel was still begging for covenant help as a son calling Yahweh his father

Judah and Israel were like wayward wives and like wayward sons. Under a united-Israel-as-Israel-was-intended theme, there is a prophetic strand about the church to come (16), but that's another matter. [23] Under the sonship theme, v19 seems to express the disappointed aim to bless loyal sons, so affirms the disloyal as sons.

Jr.31:9,20: Again Jeremiah prophesied a new Israel constituted on a new covenant, an inner Israel awaiting to come out (eg 31), while he lamented that ethnic Israel was so rebellious. Although different levels of sonship were implied, ethnic Israel did carry sonship to Yahweh as father, on which these texts work. Again, that theme is intertwined with other descriptions—for example, regathered sheep (10), a faithless daughter (22)—metaphors weaving in and out with that of covenantal—not spiritual—childhood.

Hos.1:10: Here's a future use in then current terms: "sons of the living god." Again, arguably, prophecy took up the son-of-God theme, howbeit for the Israel-of-God to come (NLT: Gal.6:16).

Hos.11:1: This is a clear reference to the historical exodus under Moses. However, again Scripture carried a subsequent fulfilment of meaning: Jesus was like ethnic Israel delivered from Egypt (Mt.2:15). Of the four phases of the term *Israel*, Phase 1 was the individual Jacob; P2 was *his* covenant borne people; P3 was the individual Jesus

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23 "The unlamented loss of the ark of the covenant is understandable within the new covenant" (Carson 1997:677). That is, it is no longer needed.

of Jacob; P4 is the church of *his* covenant borne people (Is.49:6; Lk.2:32; Ac.13:47). But initially the Sinai Level life was Yahweh's son, exodused from Egypt.

Mal.1:6: Both son and servant themes were used: Ethic Israel had been both, and had failed at both. Ethnicity ultimately fails.

Mal.2:10-1: "Have we not all one father? Has not one god created us?" The context was not of a universal, or global, father, but of Israel and Judah's faithlessness towards their covenantal father on high.

Not of Israel as Yahweh's son/sons

2 Sam.7:14/1 Chr.22:9-10; 28:6: This is a subdivision on fatherhood. The term *father* could function as a caring and personal lord over a set task, such as kingship. The former text is sometimes simply assumed to simply mean Jesus (Heb.1:5).[24] However, the latter texts explicitly mean Solomon, a literal son of King David. Remember that some texts carry immediate and subsequent fulfilment, and it is wrong to dismiss either their immediate or their subsequent fulfilments.[25]

These texts can show a deeper level: chosen persons within the chosen people, chosen for task. Interestingly Yahweh could even choose people from outside of his chosen people, such as King Cyrus who did not know him (Is.45:1,4). Solomon built Yahweh's temple at the Sinai level; the greater than Solomon built Yahweh's temple at the messianic level (Mt.12:42//Lk.11:31).

Ps.103:13: This does not say that Yahweh *is* Israel's father, merely that he is *like* a father. Later we read that Yahweh loved them more than any human mother did (Is.49:15). That no more showed Yahweh *to be* their mother, than Jesus wishing to be like a mother hen, made

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24 To say "also Jesus", is right. "Historically the words may be said to find a partial fulfilment in Solomon, the son of David, who completed the building of the first temple. But the perfect fulfilment did not come until the time of David's greater son" (Guthrie 73), who was, and who built, the true temple.

25 Similarly, Is.7:14. At the immediate level, a young bride would soon normally conceive a normal son—he would function as a time clock to King Ahaz. At a deeper fulfilment, a young bride (Mary) would supranormally conceive a supranormal son—fully human, and also deific.

his people chickens (Mt.23:37//Lk.13:34). It's poetic comparison. Nor did Paul and his team acting in motherly and fatherly ways, make them mothers or fathers to their people (see 1 Ths.2:7,11).

Pr.3:12: As Ps.103:13. This simply likens Yahweh to a father.

In the OT, the idea of adoption into sonship, whether of the people at large, or as royalty in particular, is a given. Of royalty, for instance, we read that "…today I have become your father" (Ps.2:7), and that "David my servant…. I will make…my firstborn son" (Ps.89:20,27).[26] Even after Israel retired from the bigger story because of their sins, the remnant, the Jews, could still cling to the fact that Yahweh was still their national father (Is.63:16). This familial theme—which I would call an earlier fulfilment of prophecy—would extend and crystallise in its new covenant fulfilment, when the lower level and parochial, went global and deeper. The father would go global.

[26] White 111 notes this as a likely background thought to Col.1:15,18. Other NT texts = Lk.2:7; Rm.8:29; Heb.1:6; 11:28; 12:23; Rv.1:5. Many of about 130 OT Greek references mean genetically firstborn son, but other uses show the wider range of meanings.

Chapter 3

Searching for a Father

Looking beyond a brother

"The charismatic experience can most certainly rejuvenate people and churches, but how much evidence is there that it can mature them, by delivering them from their insidious self-concern and making them profitable and outward-moving[27] members of the body of Christ? The answer to that depends in considerable measure on how they relate to the father" (Smail 10). And that in turn can depend on being taught.

Alas, the age of Christian bookshops has perhaps all but ended, for the playing field is not level enough to compete without subsidy. But in the happy seventies, I had been a regular customer at *Good News Bookshop*, 67 Wright Street, Hull, East Yorkshire. Alas, it is no more. In the eighties, I worked unpaid in the *Kirkby Christian Bookshop*, 27 Diamond Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. Again, alas.[28] But such shops were, and are, merely servants of Christ: servants come and go, and services can change. As with Php.1:18, the important thing is that good Christian books circulate.

It was from the latter shop that I bought Thomas A Smail's, *The Forgotten Father* (1987),[29] which I still highly recommend for its

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27 Church growth can be by outreach, and/or by indrag.

28 Pure coincidence, upon my word! I did not cause their downfall. I knew Brian Taylor, and Terry Furness—respective managers—quite well.

29 It does suffer for a slight lack of proofreading. Eg although he liked being systematic—the "point 2.2.1" type of methodical layout—his drafts weren't all harmonised for the book. Eg, p54 has point 1, p56 has point 5, and p57—the same chapter—has point 1. On p135 we're hit by point 4, but no 1,2, or 3. He added headings in his second edition, but not very well. On p116, I suspect that homoousios was meant, not a second homoiousios. On p143, Jhn.1:12, not v18, was meant.

paterology, not perhaps for its Calvinism. Subtitled, *Rediscovering the Heart of the Christian Gospel*, some say that it is more difficult than cardiology; some say that I am even more so. I am not seeking to simplify Smail's book. I am seeking to reread it, to mull over it out loud, to reflect perhaps at variance along its lines, and to add a little beyond. Smail was a leading figure in the Charismatic Renewal, but came to praise it more critically. His main thesis was one of mine before I read him: that God the father is the basic Christian focus, but is largely forgotten by a large section of Christianity (Smail 13).

To me, Smail reinforced those theses. And then he went to town in teaching about God the father. There is more to God, than God the son as a human being. Put figuratively, if you don't live at the heart of the gospel, you won't work as well as otherwise as a hand of the gospel, and you can be—even in charismatic circles—more likely to be more insular—enjoying perhaps the fat, seeking experience over maturity, extent over depth.

A Pentecostal teacher, Leo C Harris (Australia), showed me—I think in the exciting sixties—the New Covenant fatherhood theme. I can fairly confidently say, that I have never asked the lord for anything since.[30] Perhaps I should quickly explain that. Following Paul, I generally do not call God the father, *lord* (1 Cor.8:6)—although he is of course the ultimate lord[31]—and I ask God, not the lord.

In the new creation—is it "the next step in evolution"?[32]—we can see that God the father is vitally involved (1 Cor.8:6): he "is responsible for all things. We came from him…" (Morris 123). "Paul used the term *father* here to convey that God is the ultimate origin of all things (11:12)" (Garland 2015:8754/28025). Paul's context is the new creation.

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30 As a caveat, I many a time utter the ancient maranatha prayer—Come lord Jesus, but not to save us existentially by improving human society, but by establishing the postapocalyptic society.

31 For the church the son is the strategic, coordinating lord, and the spirit is the tactical lord.

32 Lewis 2002:2.5.60.

The primary NT focus is God the father, not God the son.[33] The new creation is a spiritual creation, a christological creation, and is sometimes called, a little weakly, adoptive fatherhood.[34]

In the new creation process we can see God the father, both in preparation (Gal.4:4) and in realisation (Gal.4:6).[35] There is also God the son, the crucified one (Jhn.3:14-5; 12:32), in whom folk are new creations within the new creation kingdom, each with new lordship, new authority, and a new heart, etc (2 Cor.5:17). God the spirit brings about new life, putting God's love into us (Jhn.3:5; Rm.5:5).

The Athanasian Creed biblically states that Christianity neither confuses the persons of the triunity, nor separates their mission, though it limits salvation to understanding such.[36] Its biblical bit is the gold-standard, and is the mission of this book. So before going any further, let me say that God the father is not God the son; that God the son is not God the spirit; that God the spirit is not God the father; that Jesus is not God; that Jesus is not God the son; that Jesus is God-the-son-as-a-human-being.

Affirming the essence of God the Logos, we should not confuse the logos-as-source with the logos-as-stream, or his immutable eternality with his mutable temporality (not temporariness). Jesus is a merger of facts, snippets put somewhat poetically in Scripture. He is deity-with-humanity and when a mortal, he created by his crucifixion the basis for a new humanity (Eph.2:15). Together, God the father, God the son, and God the spirit, are deity, and each is deity in spiritual essence/substance (ὁμοουσια/*homoousia*).

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33 Jehovah's Witnesses one ditch by falling into a deeper ditch.

34 See IVP's *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1994:571. The New Testament does picture Christians as children of God by adoption (spiritual legality), but it also pictures them as children of God by new birth (spiritual organics). Both are important pictures.

35 A strange construction—'because/to show that'. It cannot mean that after becoming a child of God we receive the spirit of adoption, any more than v7 makes becoming an heir of God, subsequent to becoming a child of God.

36 Such knowledge is basic to Level 3, but not to Level 4, salvation.

Jesus is the permanent temporal mode of the uncreated second person of the eternal tripersonal society. In his essence, God the son is noncarnate, but has a carnate mode (that is, Jesus) begun in time and space, an outraying of himself.[37] Even like there were places where Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was not born, so there was a time when Jesus was not. *Contra* Arius, there was not a time when God the son was not. It's a little bit like saying—highly simplified—that our sun has always been, yet that the ray of light that shone two thousand years ago on Bethlehem, had not always been shining. Hence, Jesus (not the immortal, *pace* Charles Wesley) could die (1 Cor.15:3); hence Jesus had limited knowledge (Mk.13:32); hence Jesus was subordinate to his heavenly father (Jhn.10:25).

Ah, you might say with a smug smile, but does the NT not call Jesus *God*? Firstly, I would reply that what it says is that God the son is Θεος/*Theos*. It's how best to translate that in such contexts, that is the issue. I readily insist that such texts do indeed proclaim that he is deific (deity incarnate), though he is not all that there is to deity.[38]

"The language of trinitarian theology is much more abstract, complicated, and careful, than the language of the New Testament, but the *content* of the doctrine of the trinity is only an explication of the New Testament doctrine of God. We are not here in the realm of philosophical conundrums, but of scriptural truth set out in a way that could define and defend it against the attacks that were being made upon it" (Smail 22).

The biblical data are like letters within envelopes, meaning within. I've tried to put the raw data from the textual terms into systematic theological terms, following the lead from the great creeds in church history. Thus I now count it cringeworthy, to shallowly say that *God* became human, or that *God* died for us. As Karl Rahner noted, against the "common perception that God in a general sense became

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37 I was pleased to find that Karl Barth also spoke of Jesus as "a different mode of being" (Smail 121); God the son noncarnate is the fulness; Jesus the mode.

38 NT texts directly saying that God the son (whether noncarnate or incarnate), is deific: Jhn.1:1,18; Rm.9:5; Tts.2:13; 2 Pt.1:1. MEVV Grades: A+ (NLT); A (NRSV); B+ (ERV/NIV); B (NCV); C+ (CEB); C (CEV/LEB); D- (NKJV).

man", we should insist that it was "precisely and particularly the son (not God in general) who became man" (Letham 292). As Jesus said, God is in essence spirit (Jhn.4:24); it was the physical body of Jesus which died, not God [the father]—that's patripassian.

When, as Smail put it, we are looking for father, we should look not so much *at* Jesus, as *through* Jesus, the way [to the father] (Jhn.14:6). Jesus represents as human the noncarnate son who is the exact representation of the father, and that representation is seen through his incarnation (Heb.1:3). To see Jesus is in some way to see the father—his nature, his will, but hardly his omnipresence. And seeing the father is the way that Jesus did his mission, and the way we are to do our mission.

The father is the "catholic person within the Holy Trinity who gives context and unity to the work of the son and the manifestation of the spirit" (Smail 17). Is either our christology (doctrine about Christ), huiology (doctrine about God's son) or pneumatology (doctrine about the spirit) better developed than our paterology (doctrine about the father)? This book might help.

Apart from token acknowledgement, Smail held that non-charismatic Evangelicals tended to focus on Jesus (atonement/ resurrection), yet making little of the fact that he is only *the son* because he comes from *the father*. Smail held that Charismatic evangelicals tended to focus on the spirit as the source of charismata (gracious spiritual manifestations), or better, perhaps seeing him as the spirit of Christ (that is, the agent of Christ) (Smail 19-20). But do both camps fall short of a balanced theology (doctrine about deity)?

Eastern Orthodoxism takes the next step: the spirit is the prime agent of the son, who is the prime agent of the father—his will be done. Whether Orthodoxism operates in that dynamic, or is content to gently flow in traditional doctrine, is quite another question.

Orthodoxism, like Catholicism, takes the credal idea of the spirit proceeding from the father. With Orthodoxism, I disagree with the ambiguous, unilateral, and divisive, credal addition by Rome—the Filioque—that the spirit also proceeds from the [noncarnate?] son. But in the context of mission, it is a biblical truism, granting first that the son's 'name'—that is, authority—is derivative from the father. In the NT mission the spirit proceeded from the father,

therefore through the son: father→son→spirit. Again we can see the ultimacy of the father.

Trinitarian's summit

Smail suggested that in terms of our fellowship with deity—our κοινωνια/*koinōnia*—that the fuller biblical ideal includes the father, the son (1Jhn.1:3), and the spirit (2Cor.13:13/4).[39] That is, our fellowship should be trinitarian. I heartily agree. But how often do we remember the father? Does he get even a third of our fellowship times? What proportion of such times do we spend on each person *as a person*? What focus of our lives is on him? Is he only highlighted when we defend theism (apologetics)?

In seeing Jesus in action, we see the actions of the father, and often, incidentally, the actions of the spirit. There is but one deity, though three persons who are deific, one of whom has incarnated himself to us as Yeshua. On meeting the risen messiah, Thomas exclaimed that he was to him as God and master (Jhn.20:28), deity as man. Thomas only had a rough idea, and expressed himself bluntly.

We should not, by the way, think that by calling Jesus *lord* (κυριος/*kurios*) before the crucifixion, anyone assumed his incarnate deity, his deificity. True, the term *can* show God's name, such as when the

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[39] One curiosity is the last verse of 2 Cor.13. The Geneva and the Bishops Bible combined the greetings from God's people with v12. However, the KJV—perhaps in error—numbered it as v13. All three agree that the next part was a verse, so numbered as v13 in the Geneva and Bishops Bible, and v14 in the KJV. All three had extra wording after 'Amen' about Titus and Lucas. The KJV of 1769 has deleted from the KJV of 1611, the words "…the second Epistle to the Corinthians, was written from Philippos a citie of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas." Another curiosity is why what made one verse in Lk.6:42, made two verses in Mt.7:4-5. OT versification goes back at least to Rabbi Isaac Nathan, c.1440. The history of chapter divisions is older and less clear.

As to its meaning, David E Garland suggested that Paul used neither an objective (the spirit as the object of our fellowship) nor a subjective (the spirit as the agent of our fellowship) genitive, but a plenary (objective and subjective) genitive, here. The spirit, who produces fellowship between us, should be fellowshipped by us (Garland 1999:556).

NT, following the Greek OT, has *lord* without the definite article, without the *the*. For the anarthrous use of Kurios/Kurion could act in the OT as a proper name for Yahweh.[40] Put into a purely human example, Lord could act as the surname for Jack Lord (*Hawaii Five-0*).

But *kurios*/*kurion* often acted merely as a socially polite, 'sir', no more meaning deity, than 'madam' means a 'goddess'. By their foolish actions and words, we can see how little his disciples knew who and what their lord was.

The NT denies the idea of three gods. The OT revelation, though at a secondary level, was clear on that point: "Hear O Israel, Yahweh your god is one Yahweh" (Dt.6:4). He did not have alternative selves in different locations, and Israel was only to worship him as deity. The NT revelation, being at a tertiary level, makes clear that deity is intrinsically societal, an eternal society of three persons, not "three gods side by side" (Smail 23). Tritheism is rightly rejected by Christianity/Islam/Judaism.

"God is 'king of all ages' (αιωνων/*aiōnōn*), this age and the next, *within* and *beyond* normal time and therefore eternal" (Kay & Moxon 98 on 1 Tm.1:17). When we delve into what deity is in itself—intrinsically, transcendently—we look into what some call the ontological trinity, deity beyond creation. When we go into trinity within creation—immanent—we go into what some call the economic trinity. 'Economic' here is not a financial term, but came from a Greek term οικονομια/*oikonomia*, which relates to home economics, a.k.a. domestic science, an important subject which schools used to teach. The universe is a 'house' under God's management. It being a bit misleading nowadays, let's say *oiconomic*/*oiconomical*, instead. The trinity plays a managerial role, a function in space and time.

Ontologically each person of deity is deity in essence. Missionally on the universal canvass, there is a hierarchy. They are also different in person, and we should picture them like an ABC triangle, not as an AAA triangle. Deity is revealed in action and relationship.

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40 "…κυριος is often anarthrous, functioning much like a proper noun", but sometimes it is anarthrous for other factors (David 103).

This jump from suprareality into reality, from supernature into nature, is important, because it refers to revelation, and revelation can come at various levels. The nature of deity is partially revealed within creation, since the universe is his handiwork. It's like we get a glimpse into an artist by their artwork.

Impersonally, science can discover much about deity. Personally, deity is particularly revealed in Jesus, an incarnational jump: "In times past, God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors, through the prophets. But now at last for now, he has sent his son to bring his message to us. He has appointed him heir of all things, and created the world through him" (Heb.1:1-2).[41] Written after the jump from Sinai to Christianity, this text covers times-past (Level 2) and also at-last (Level 3) revelation. It may also accommodate the-world revelation (Level 1), which includes our surrounds (God's handiwork, even if defiled), and our human nature (God's Image, even if defiled).

We can examine the general pagan worship of deity through the primary education of polytheiism (multiple divinities, traditionally mislabelled *gods/goddesses*), the secondary education of henotheism (a focus on one spirit as deity), right through to the tertiary education of trinitarianism (there are no 'gods' but God, a tripersonal being). Put this way, you can see that each Level can keep some genuine insight (wheat), but can cast off ideas (chaff) which helped at fuzzier levels.[42] The best churches clearly promote clear tertiary education.

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41 The Bible often speaks in terms of ultimacy, of spiritual rather than scientific organisation. Science can help us examine the forces and universal laws set in place to produce the universe and our particular world.

42 Most Christians now call physical circumcision, chaff, not wheat (Rm.2:29). The Sinai practice spoke fuzzily of a spiritual circumcision which would make ethnic Gentiles spiritually Israelites/Jews. Debate exists as to whether literal tithing, and Sabbath-days (Dt.5:12), are wheat or chaff. All Christians would accept that murder (Dt.5:17) remains a sin, so long as God's Image embodied remains capable of being murdered (Gen.9:6).

And ethically principles must be divined. For instance, in Australia vehicles must drive on the left-hand side of roads: the underlying principle is safety.

We should consider each member of deity in themself. But in making deity personal to ourselves, we must see them in their united mission. In tennis, sometimes you have a doubles match, where both sides have two players. Imagine if you only watched one player per side, blind to their team player. Imagine Jesus-onlyism!

Without trinitarian theology, talk of *the fatherhood of God*, and *the brotherhood of man*, can be little more than common abstraction of God, and wishy-washy thinking of mankind, separating the Imago from the Dei, downplaying the unity of Gen.1:27, 5:1-2 and 9:6. The Imago Dei (*Image of God*) is itself an image of the eternal society.

Effectively, to focus on one member of deity to the basic exclusion of the others, is to miss trinitarianism, the three persons of one name: "...disciple all nations; immersing disciples [in water] with reference to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt.28:19). Since a nonperson, a mere force, would hardly have shared one name with two persons, it is clear that Matthew cited Jesus' talk of three persons sharing a corporate name. Biblical evangelism seeks to convert human beings, irrespective of ethnic race, into a sanctifying relationship of understanding, and obeying, a deific unity of three co-eternal persons inextricably linked by one corporate name/society, the Eternal Uncreated Society.

Imagine being rescued from drowning by a ship with three guys, but only getting to know one or two of them, not all three fellows in the ship—fellow-ship with each! Alas that blindness to the father is blindness to his love and care for us. He gave up his beloved son to redeem us. He sent his spirit to care for us and transform us within his life. He calls us to himself. We need total orientation to the total trinity, to spirit and son but also to the father, to remind us that man's chief end is not the renewing of the soul, healing of the body, or even the renewal of the church, but is to glorify God, which is to enjoy him forever.

The Russian Federation drives on the right-hand side of roads: the underlying principle is safety. Applying Australian practice to the Russian Federation would violate the underlying principle of safety. Biblical principles come before biblical particulars.

Chapter 4

Finding the Father

The heartfelt Abba

If we willingly seek the father, we will find him. Finding him does not mean that he had not already found us. Finding him means that we had not got the message. Paul listed two expressions which the spirit flows through us if we let him. They come with conversion. One is that Jesus is lord (1 Cor.12:3); the other is that God is father/ abba (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:6). Along with christification—the *imago christi*—relationship and confession are chief goals of the spirit. While we should treasure spirit-enabled phenomena, such as glossolalia, and spirit-baptism more so, we should put even more weight on living by the spirit, under messiah's lordship and God's fatherhood.

Spiritual conversion into Christianity, takes us not into humanity (father by creation)—we're already there—nor into Sinai (father by corporate identity)—it's no longer there—but takes us into God's family and into the individual father by his son: "All things have been committed to me by my father. No one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him" (NIV: Mt.11:27).[43]

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43 In the NT context, this statement is a one-of-a-kind, exclusive connection to God as father, in line with Jesus' filial-awareness as God's one-of-a-kind, exclusive son—filiality. NT theology qualifies our filiality in various ways.

Also to note, is the fact that talk of babies/children did not always mean literal human babies/children. God was praiseworthy (Mt.11:25) in revealing the messianic message to spiritual babies, that is, often human adults open to happily grasp a little of who Jesus was, like Nicodemus of Jhn.3:2; like the Canaanite woman of Mt.15:22. Spiritually, his immature disciples were to be like children (Mt.18:3), so as to enter the messianic kingdom. He did not teach that to die in infancy gives automatic entrance to heaven.

About 30 years ago (950311), I recorded this vision I had of two tramps. [*There were two tramps tramping through the snow on a snowy winter eventide. Passing a window, they saw a merry family in the lounge by a log fire. Such was another world to them. As they tramped by they read a sign above the door which said, "Any who walk through this door shall be members of this family". One tramp ignored the staggering sign and tramped on. The other tramp believed the sign and hesitatingly ventured into the hallway. Behold, somehow he entered the lounge dressed comfortably for a family evening by the fire and, with slippers on, was welcomed by the others as an equal member and given a good seat by the gladdening fire.*

Later, perhaps another day, looking through the window the former tramp saw a tramp tramping through the snow some distance away and tramping away. His father too saw the tramp, and invited his new son to don boots instead of slippers and go with him to invite the tramp in. This they did together. I know not what became of the tramp they went out to. They did indeed speak to him in good will: I think he was moved from sadness to joy, his face was touched by the glow of a new dawn.]

It's as if the only son of the family house, is its door (in my vision) or its doorkeeper.[44] Like all roads leading to Rome, ideas can come in many shapes and forms. And through the one-of-a-kind son, and by his spirit, we become adopted, spiritually born, sons or daughters of the house. Abba/father is a cry of joy, rather than credal confession about he who is ultimate lord. It is not *about* God, but *towards* God: theology becomes worship; confession becomes adoration. And it is trinitarian, in that it is language of the son, spoken to his father, and shared with by the spirit.

Though linking the abba word to Jesus, there are forms of it which predated him. It is though, the familial form of it which so far as we can see, was unique to him. That unique form can be put as *daddy* for young children, or *dad*/*pappa*/*father* for grown up folk. It's the basic Dear Father idea of warm familiality, which is the constant.

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44 Compare Jhn.10:3 (doorkeeper) and 7 (door).

In days of the prodigal son,[45] normally sons remained with their fathers. Here the immature son flouted convention, and learned the hard way before his return. Staying as sons (not wedded daughters) with one's father, was cultural. At that time it reflected a handy picture of living with our heavenly father under his roof, but proclaimed that fatherly love could even welcome back sons who rebelled.

This does not mean that all aspects of that story reflect our heavenly father, nor does it mean that before conversion, each of us had actually lived with God-as-father. Conversion is not restoration to a prior relationship; we were not prodigals. In short, let us not base too much thinking on the father—or the sons—in *The Prodigal Son*, but factor it in to plain teaching.[46]

God is neither an indulgent nor an autocratic father. Perhaps somewhat in line with that parable—which features extraordinarily generous love—he is prepared to let Christians leave if they choose, and pleased to welcome them back if they choose. Love and humility go hand in hand with the theme of repentance and restoration. I have long disliked George Matheson's line, "O Love that will not let me go". Love *will* allow its object to desert, though will not initiate desertion of its object.[47] Let's not read our earthly fathers' attitudes and outlooks too much into our idea of our heavenly father, for they are at best limited parables, muddy streams from the pure lake.

We should also see in the abba word, a gut-wrenching cry. It is likely that Jesus, a native Aramaic speaker—though he would have known Greek—would have often used this word in prayer. Significantly its only trace on his lips, is Mk.14:36—a Gethsemane word.

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45 Compare Jr.31:18-20.

46 Besides the obvious rift between ethnic Jews (Lk.15:2), and hints of fuller salvation by the cross (Jhn.1:12), I suspect that this parable applied to the then bigger pagan/Jew ethnic divide, leaving such 'brothers' unreconciled.

47 Matheson approached the line from the other correct direction. Being physically blind, he needed others to guide him. Deserted by a fiancée upon going blind, and later by a devoted sister upon her marriage, he saw that God would not desert him for personal reasons: *will not desert me*.

There he knew that the Battle of Golgotha, like a bitter cup, waited for him just around the corner of sunrise (Nisan 15). He could accept and welcome that as his father's set plan. He had rebuked Simon Peter for suggesting otherwise. But at Gethsemane he experienced unexpected psychological agonies, and he did not know whether such were in his father's will. Therefore—and it is a pattern for us—he let his request be known unto God his father (Php.4:6). It was basically that if the Battle of Gethsemane was in God's plans, fine: the primary issue was that God's will, God's plan, be done. But if not against God's plans, Jesus' subservient wish could be done.

Some say that his will conflicted with his father's (*monothelism*). Some say that his human will conflicted with his deific will (*dithelism*). I say that he willed one will, but being human had a set of personal, human, wishes—deific will enfleshed. There was no more conflict of wills, than if a husband says to his wife that his top priority/will is to please her, and if she really plans that he'd go shopping with her this Friday, then shopping it is. But if she's not really bothered, he'd prefer to play golf. That is, his *will* is pleasing her; his *wish* is pleasing himself, and his *wish* is subservient, secondary, to his *will*. The Greek term θελω/*thelō*, in fact, has this range of meaning of soft and hard. I'd suggest "...but if...then not what I wish, but [I will] as you [will]."

Leo Harris used to say that you only have what you can hold under pressure. An incredible thing was that at the Battle of Gethsemane, Jesus being a human being though unfallen, maintained his abba fellowship under such fire—the "willingness of his will" (Smail 38). It was tested deeper in the Battle of Golgotha. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (NIV: Lk.23:46). His abba connection was deep-seated, a core value, fibrous. Is ours?

This connected back to Ps.31:5, where a godly psalmist was hoping to be physically delivered: "Into your hands I commit my spirit. Rescue me, Yahweh, for you are a faithful god."[48] The psalmist sought this-life

[48] Perhaps having had previous deliverance (CEB/CEV/LEB/NKJV/NRSV).

rescue from death; Jesus sought life after death. See also Stephen's closing words in Ac.7:59.[49]

For us, the *abba* word is an inner witness. Even if it doesn't flower in our thinking life, it remains a bulb within. My conversion to Christ was around the age of six, a seed-encounter more than a lifestyle. My Christian lifestyle sprouted in my high school years, perhaps in 1969, with spirit-baptism, then water-baptism, coming I think in late 1970. It got me praying, but Leo Harris was the one under God who got me into God's fatherhood as a prime focus of petitionary prayer. All Christians have God's fatherhood as a bulb, a seed, but not all have that relationship above the ground of their spirit, active in their psyche. The primitive church was savvier.

Rm.8:15 and Gal.4:6 are traces of such mentality—a new and deep father-relationship. The fact that abba was both retained and translated, showed how endemic it was to the Hebraic-Aramaic section of the church. Retaining it was saying that its form was not superfluous, and thus would incline the Hellenist sector to probe its meaning. You can have a reality, yet not be conscious of it. The Egyptians had brains but thought of them as so much fat, and their mummies as the brainless dead. "Experientially it is possible to confess Christ and not live in the power of the spirit or have confidence before the father" (Smail 42).[50] We might need the light of a Harris or a Smail to germinate, to coax forth, the hidden seed (1 Cor.3:5-7).

The spirit points to abba

We know ourselves, by our knowledge of God. We are imagodei, images of God. When we separate God from ourselves, we are merely imago, unaware of what we are likenesses of. That is one reason why atheism is intrinsically nihilistic, lawless, amoral, sub-

49 The NT revelation all but precludes requests to Jesus, though Stephan's was no ordinary this-life request and doubled as a witness.

50 Tertullian accused some Christians of being blind to the father and having cast out the Holy Spirit: *Paracletum fugavit et patrem crucifixit*.

educational.[51] I put that idea on a Christian forum once, and had some Christian as judge and jury apologise to a recent convert from atheism, for such as me who apparently had just said that atheists are intrinsically nihilistic, lawless, amoral—I am not such a fool! Read the text.

Incidentally a saving grace is that few atheists have a full separation, so can still perceive, think, and act, morally—some do; some don't. Logically, if creation is mere random happenstance, under no moral and mindful baton, then there is no objective basis for morality. *Don't murder*, is predicated on the idea that every human being, like them or loath them, is in God's Image (imagodei: Gen.9:6).

If they are merely random biological phenomena, blobs of tissue—as abortionists like to unscientifically assert—and the concept, *morality*, is merely a concept with no transcendent taproot beyond nature, then there is no absolute reason not to murder those you dislike, and your only questions need be personal ones: *Is it worth my while; can I get away with it unscathed; can they be useful to me?* Atheists are in God's image and can be godly, but simply cannot see what they are, since they are not self-defined in God. The Dei bulb might well be within, but has not flowered. Theirs is the Emyn Muil, where at best a few gnarled and stunted trees might still slowly wither before the east wind of Mordor.

Even we log-in-eye Christians, let alone the non-Christian world, sometimes fail to self-identify as children of our heavenly father, though that is what we are. "See how very much our father loves us, that we may be called his children. And we really are his children. But since the people of this world do not know who Christ is, they don't know who we are" (1 Jhn.3:1). Realising God's individual fatherhood changes our perspective fundamentally. It is a healing thing. Remove the log; see the vision.

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[51] Anthony Flew's *The Presumption of Atheism* (1976) actually backs this point. Even converted to theism—subspecies deism—he maintained the idea that we are not born with a knowledge of deity, but can grow into it. But perhaps at least we are born with a perception of deity, transcendence.

Paul pictured the *abba* word as a spirit-prompted cry we speak to our father (Rm.8:15). From συμμαρτυρει/*summarturei* we get the word martyr. How should we translate it in Rm.8:16? Smail suggested that it is better to see that witness as towards us (Wycliffe). In short, here either the spirit witnesses to our spirit (LEB), or having done so, he and our spirit witness to us: "....Together they tell us that we are God's children" (NIrV). The point is that we only get the fathership message at the spiritual level, by hearing the spirit, to whom we are often so deaf. Revelation is a penny that often hangs long above our heads before it drops. Jesus always heard his father.

Paul pictured the *abba* word as the spirit's cry to us (Gal.4:6). This perhaps reflects more Rm.8:16, the basis for Rm.8:15. But both contexts introduce the fact that we have a rich inheritance. And the inheritance is not Jesus, since he is a co-inheritor (Rm.8:17): Jesus is our brother, our lord. Thus the picture is of being earthly children travelling towards a heavenly goal, enjoying heavenly tasters.

There is also a link to Abraham, along with the idea that his ethnic descendants were never, nor were ever meant to be, his true heirs: Rm.4:13; Gal.3:29. That is a messianic link, also referred to in Heb.1:2 —Jesus is the heir, through whom we become co-heirs by becoming family members. Much could be said on this. But we should pick up the idea of land.

The Promised Land, geographical Canaan, was a symbolic settlement for ethnic Israel, offering safe and secure borders around an abundant land, within which to grow as a covenant community in relationship with Yahweh. The true (αληθινος/*alēthinos*) promised land, is spiritual security and abundance now within which—as individuals and community in christ—to grown in relationship with the trinity.[52] And ultimate life is the everlasting land still to be entered into. Thus, inheritance has application and life now, and application and life still to come.

Just as the individual fatherhood theme can be within us in seed form, so its related heirship theme can be hidden within unless we see our filiality as children of the father. Heirs are to live as heirs,

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52 Elmer A Marten's *God's Design*, covers this in depth.

which can involve costly obedience, suffering in some ways like the chief heir, helping us a little bit more to become in some ways like him—christification. Both Evangelical and Charismatic circles have been criticised for lacking biblical emphases on the father and on sanctification. If only a few become adults it's hardly ideal, even if there are ever increasing infants, happy and clappy within charismatic crèches. Let's mature.

A little aside but close to my heart, I cheer Smail's line about "chorus singing that lacks the dimension of worship" (47)—immaturity. Spot on a sore point. Did he merely mean ditties that lack well-crafted music and sustained poetical form? No. Chris Idle was also saddened that music leaders have hijacked the idea, worship, and often fail to redeem the time that should be better given to other aspects of corporate service, such as preaching, teaching, and quiet reflection. He also saw that surprisingly we sing many unitarianism songs.[53]

Such songs are, in my judgement, antithetical to worship—having a form of worship but denying the theology thereof. From such turn away, or suffer and pay. But why have many enthusiastically sung Hillsong's line, *You alone are God, Jesus*, untroubled by the fact that Reuben Morgan lacked trinitarianism in his bones, myopic to the fact that Jesus is but God-the-son-as-a-human-being? Even *The Heart of Worship* (Michael Smith (2001)) flags up the strange-fire idea that worship is all about...Jesus. Smith forgot the forgotten father.

If asked, both those songwriters would probably have ticked the trinitarian box, but they wrote not as warp and woof trinitarians, to a fanbase as fuzzy as they. And many songs, which toggle between singing to deity, and singing to ourselves, confuse rather than comprehend, prayer, let alone understand worship. We are served by many sickly songs, to which copyright law denies any healing.

A recent trend, offering a slither of hope, speaks of sung-worship. Singing isn't the big picture, nor should songwriters be idols. Seeing the bigger picture—that worship can be clothed in song but isn't song—can show the abba worship of Gethsemane and the lesser worship of Job, when God gives not, but rather takes away,

53 On this see my *Singing's Gone Global*, p50.

happiness. Though he slay me, yet would I praise him. Let us see the 24/7 worship of a humble life. "Christian maturity and holiness are not to be found in a narrow pursuit of charismatic experiences and manifestations in and for themselves, but in the existential rediscovery of abba father" (Smail 48).

What we receive as heirs, is secondary and subservient to what we become as coheirs with Christ and heirs of the father. Faith in the father is an incentive to live sanctified lives pleasing to him. This is finding the father at the heart of worship.

Chapter 5

The Son Sees the Father

God's fatherhood is biblical and messianic

Traditionally speaking, "Jesus Christ is the eternal son of God incarnate [as] man" (Smail 51). There is a link between the sonship of Jesus, and our filiality (sonship or daughtership). The NT writers always maintained a qualitative distinction of familyhood, though they came up with different ways to do so. In short, for them the importance was in the distinction, more than the way to express it.

Let's focus on the one-of-a-kind sonship/filiality of God the son, who noncarnate is nonhuman, uncreated, and eternal, and incarnated is human, the sinless and now glorified Second/Last/Eschatological Adam, who has begun a new redeemed humanity, and calls all Christians his brothers and sisters, united as his human family.

Before his death he generally concealed—apart from occasional hints—his deific nature, a nature which was incarnated in him. It remains foolish, even docetic and incarnation denying, to speak in terms of *God* walking with us in human guise. The folly is partly in the fact that in the NT, generally the term *God* either means deity at large, or the father in particular.

When I hear Christians, even card-carrying trinitarians at leadership level, unwittingly or wittingly speak/pray of God the father being crucified, I cringe. If speaking of Jesus, let us focus down from God-in-general,[54] to God-the-son, as a useful first step. And as a useful

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54 Charles Wesley's *'Tis Finished! The Messiah Dies*, has this line: *God for a guilty world hath died*, sadly typical for Charles. Like the protest of Nestorius that Mary was *Christ's* mother, not *God's* mother, someone really should have told Charles that *Christ* died, not *God*. We still sing his heresy into our

second step, let us factor in his noncarnate/incarnate distinction. In short, let us neither confuse the persons of the trinity, nor confuse between the source and the projected image.

The four Gospels are united in witness to messiah's distinct sonship. Some foolishly assume that it was a church-invented idea, then try to work out which Evangelist (Gospel writer) invented it. Unlike our letters/emails, the Gospels were not dated: tracing is speculative.

Some think that *John* predated the Synoptics,[55] that is, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. Hence they speak of Mt.11:27//Lk.10:22 as like a thunderbolt fallen from a Johannine sky. That is, the Synoptics pinched an idea from John, since the idea of an exclusive son/father relationship was an idea of John's—or whoever wrote that Gospel. An alternate idea is that the Synoptics predated *John*. Thus, some speak of a Johannine flower risen from Synoptic soil.

Fancy pictures aside, however, we may simply assume that Jesus himself often spoke in exclusive father/son terms (with OT son-of-man hints), and also in kingdom terms, with John highlighting the former, and the Synoptics generally highlighting the latter.[56] The Gospels shared the same sky and soil.

Granting Jesus' filial-awareness of his one-of-a-kind relationship with God the father, we can see that his praise of the father would be one-of-a-kind praise, though we can share it in lesser degree, as

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minds, such as Jordan Kauflin's Sabellian, polydirectional, misdirectional, and polytheistic, *Behold our God* (2011): *God eternal, humbled to the grave*. Rubbish!

55 A useful term, syn (with one) optic (vision), given their mutuality of cover, compared to *John*.

56 Once upon a time, many NT scholars placed more emphasis on a Hellenic (that is, a pagan) background to John's Gospel, so compared Jesus to Greek myths about divine-men. C S Lewis suggested that paganism arose from myths seeded by God, and that messiah was the true seed, myth become fact. So this saying might well have been authentic Jesus, and in The Sayings (Quelle, Q for short), although the contextual agreement between Mt. and Lk. might be too good to be Q. To diverge so little from Matthew, was Luke copying from him, as Q sceptics suggest?

children by adoption, children by spiritual birth. In the context of disciples returning from a preparatory job well done (*Luke*), Jesus affirmed/praised his father's wisdom in concealing from some major sites what he revealed to some minor sites, namely the messianic mission being seeded before the cross (Mt.11:25//Lk.10:21).

That the father's wisdom is not always ours, does not mean that *he* is wrong when we disagree—praise and seek *his* wisdom; praise the all-wise one, the omnisapient. Adjust to *him*. Also, see that such praise flows from affirmation, which flows from familyhood.

Level 1 (Common) filiality can praise deity as creatorial, etc. Level 2 (Sinai) filiality could praise God for his choice of, and love for, his special ethnic people. Level 3 (Christian) filiality can recognise God's fatherly love expressed individually for whosoever has welcomed messiah, and can therefore as insiders see the messianic kingdom which we are in: "Jesus answered, 'I assure you, unless someone is **born anew**, it's not possible [for them] to see God's kingdom.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a person once grown old, be **born again**? Surely [they] cannot re-enter [their] mother's womb and be **born again**, can they?'.... Jesus replied.... Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be **born from above**.'"[57]

Jesus himself did not need to be born anew, and as to his water-baptism, his filial awareness predated it. Some Christians place too much weight on water-baptism, perhaps even questioning whether Salvationists, if following General Booth in rejecting water-baptism, can be Christians. I became a Christian in the Salvation Army, though later believing that Christian water-baptism was based on Jesus' water-baptism by John. I see now that "the uniqueness of Jesus' water-baptism is such that nowhere in the NT is it used as an example for Christians to follow" (Stein 110).

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[57] From Jhn.3:3-7. I have used the CEB/NABRE/NRSV, to show that Nicodemus, not Jesus, used the reincarnational term, 'born again'. Jesus deliberately used an ambiguous term—which allowed the ridiculous reincarnationalism which Nicodemus humorously challenged—then twitted Nicodemus for not realising it was meant the *other* way—a *new kind* of birth 'from above', spiritual. The sequence is: ambiguity→misinterpretation→interpretation.

Jesus' water baptism was not a Christian rite/experience, nor a pattern for us. It was begun by the last prophet of the Sinai-only covenant, John. It was specifically to his ethnic people, and they were already in covenant. It was preparatory to the messianic, Christian, age, for which Jesus taught his pre-Christian disciples to pray, *Your kingdom come* (Mt.6:10//Lk.11:2). It was only to spiritually prepare ethnic Jews to be ready for messiah, an immersion *relative to* (εις/*eis*) prior repentance back to Sinai obedience: Sinai affirming.

Had Jesus repented before his water-baptism? No, but then, Yeshua did not need to repent. But what he did need to do, as messiah, was to pick up John's baton by going through the baptism process under the Baptiser—connection. For him, John's national baptism was a missional need. The mission is no more. His baptism is not for us.

In those transition years, some experienced two biblical types of water-baptism. If Christians had been baptised by John's baptism (even if done by messiah's disciples: Jhn.4:1-2), they were encouraged to nevertheless undergo Christian water-baptism (Ac.19:1-6). The latter text shows, incidentally, how spirit-baptism can postdate water-baptism. And Ac.10:44-8 shows that water-baptism can postdate spirit-baptism. Neither is dependent on the other; both are dependent on conversion. Baptismal-regeneration, whether by water or spirit, is a failed idea with many godly Christian followers.

Besides a conversion weight, another weight placed on water-baptism is an 'open heaven' teaching, a magic key to revival along these lines. 1# Jesus didn't perform miracles until after his water-baptism; 2# his water-baptism was his point of full submission; 3# therefore, we need to arrive at full submission in order to work miracles; when 4# even as heaven opened to Jesus, so it will for us.

In my opinion it 1# likens Jesus' boyhood to imperfect submission; 2# fails to see that Jesus' miracles began sometime after his baptism; 3# puts too much weight on water-baptism as symbolising submission; and 4# puts too little weight on Eph.2:18 which speaks of the 'open heaven' for all Christians.[58] Water-baptism is no Open

[58] Some might argue that all whom Paul addressed in *Ephesians* had been water-baptised. Even if so, as is likely, it remains an incidental to Paul's point.

sesame. Jesus' water-immersion marked a new phase linked to John's mission, not the crucial point of submission. Jesus' miracles began afterwards, since only then did his mission require them.[59]

By conversion, by becoming a Christian, each believer has a filial relationship with God the father as an individual father, whether or not they have been water~ and/or spirit~ baptised. Realisation is the first key to filial awareness in life.

Predating Jesus' water-baptism, we can see that his filial awareness existed at least by his early manhood: the physical temple was, while that covenant lasted, his father's house (Lk.2:49),[60] though he himself was the next level house/temple (Jhn.2:21), activated by his death-resurrection. For him, the temple was not merely "our father's house"—though it was that—but uniquely was "my father's house". I can imagine some saying, "*Your* father's house? Who on earth do you think you are?"

He knew who he was. At an early stage he was already joining the dots, questioning the rabbis, causing amazement by an insight which presupposed an earlier filial awareness and insight. And though he was/is the Second Adam, the unfallen first of a new humanity, his knowledge and wisdom, grown to that point, grew and matured further (Lk.2:52).[61] His sonship was/is in some ways non-paradigmatic—his deificity being one-of-a-kind, beyond creation. And yet his sonship was/is in some ways a pattern for us—his humanity being like ours, though unfallen, and us adopted.

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59 Did Smail overemphasise Jesus' water-baptism, when following Joachim Jeremias he suggested that the revelation was given (παρεδοθη/*paredothē*) in bulk at that point (Smail 54-5)? The aorist sometimes means completeness, rather than a point in time. Might we say that the completeness came at conception—the inception into human mode—and unfolded over time?

60 The Greek text has also less likely been translated as "father's business". But his surprise was not that they hadn't realised what he was doing—which could have been anywhere—but where he would be: 'house' is implied.

61 It is a big mistake to assume that his knowledge and actions were based on his deificity. Such assumption (*Apollinarianism*) underplays his real humanity: Mt.12:28.

Jesus' mission was also one-of-a-kind, and is a permanent headship over all of us. God-the-son-as-a-human-being, was sinless and thus totally submitted subserviently to his father. His mission included the unrepeatable atoning death,[62] and from that, exclusive headship under God, over a new humanity itself as the True Adam, the True Imagodei, the Imagochristi.

Thus, we read that as messiah, unlike prophets of old or of new, he alone had the spirit *immeasurably* (Jhn.3:34).[63] Thus we read that as messiah, all [messianic?] things were under his authority (Jhn.3:35). We, in contrast, have the spirit in measure, and authority that's dependent on messiah. Have we not smaller hearts to receive?

That has implications for the idea, Christian belief. Is it biblical belief as once delivered to the saints; is it redesigned in a more liberal way based on inner trajectory? If you do not like Paul, should you be post-Paul? May we independently create alternative teachings, or are we to be based on the apostolic teaching formed around the foundation of Christ's apostles—which includes Paul who liaised with them and was accounted one of them? 'Trajectory' theology is us saying that the canonical writings are best updated as to specifics, with any old taboos we don't like being interim taboos.

I think of a line in *The Lord of the Rings* (J R R Tolkien), where the istar Saruman the White has become corrupt and rainbow cloaked. Saruman sneers at his old position: "White serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken." To which Gandalf the Grey replied, "In which case it is no longer white" (2.2.253).

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62 Interestingly, Heb.10:10 has tended to be underlined as "once for all" by Protestant versions, while "once" was preferred in Roman Catholic versions. An RC idea is that Jesus was sacrificed once then, but subsequently via priests.

63 One of my pet-hate 'toilet' songs—alas I have many—is Andre Kempen's *I Lift My Hands* (1989). Among its painful blunders, it seeming speaks of Christ ("the coming king") as being the "spirit without measure". To say that Jesus is the Holy Spirit, totally misses John's point, and is theologically illiterate!

In trying to create an acceptable Christianity, tragically some once good Christians have broken with true Christianity, blown off course by human 'winds' (Eph.4:14), and so no longer align with Christ. Even loving words can fall short of Love's words, even as unbridled human loves can become demonic. [64] Like prestidigitation, trajectory theology is a clever trick to put whatever we like into—so to speak—Christ's mouth, and lets down our generation.

We should look to what Christ taught us, directly and through the NT writing. That is not to say that from the Gospels we should not discriminate between which of Jesus' teachings were to those under Sinai, and which of his teachings were to his kingdom.[65]

We are to know the father through the son, through the spirit. Teaching that which is not Christ-based, is at best secondary and subservient to, Christ's revelation, and should never be *contra* Christ's revelation. "A father who is not the father of Jesus will not long continue to be a father to us; a Jesus who is not son of God will not long continue to be saviour to man" (Smail 57).

We see the father's plan through his son

"No one has ever seen God. God the only son, who is at the father's side, has made God known" (CEB: Jhn.1:18).[66]

Revealing himself as God the father as individual father, has been limited through God the son, by the spirit. As man, Jesus was uniquely deific, and the father has been uniquely revealed in him and by him and by his spirit. God the son transcends Jesus, but was/

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64 C S Lewis' *The Four Loves*: human loves as autonomies, become autocrats.

65 To illustrate the former, his teaching of Mt.23:3—obey the Pharisees—does not mean that Christianity is a subset of C1 intertestamental Jewish religion: *Galatians* showed the errors of trying to comply with Sinai-specific regulations. In anticipating his coming kingdom (Christianity), he underlined the spirit's role in canonically forming the NT (Jhn.14:26).

66 Some versions have the word, begotten, introduced by St. Jerome. It does not reflect John's meaning here, and can lead to the pagan idea of a god being born/begotten. It is neither [only begotten son: KJV], nor [only begotten god: NWT]. It is something like [God the only son: NRSV]. MEVV Grades: A+ (ERV/NABRE/NIV/NRSV); A (CEB/CEV); A- (NCV/NLT); B (LEB); D- (NKJV).

is incarnate as Jesus. The ontology of uncreated deity, shone/shines through Jesus. As Karl Barth put it, only deity can reveal deity. "Praise God, the father of our lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.1:3; Eph:1:3; 1 Pt.1:3).[67] We praise him best who praise him in Christ, for we see his plan best through his son.

No other world religion,[68] holds to deity as incarnated as a permanent mode. Yet, as C S Lewis put it, "if you are a Christian, you are free to think that all those [other] religions, even the queerest ones, contain at least some hint of the truth. When I was an atheist I had to try to persuade myself that most of the human race have always been wrong about the question that mattered to them most; when I became a Christian I was able to take a more liberal view. But, of course, being a Christian does mean thinking that where Christianity differs from other religions, Christianity is right and they are wrong. As in arithmetic—there is only one right answer to a sum, and all other answers are wrong; but some of the wrong answers are much nearer being right than others" (Lewis 2002:35).

The NT affirms the idea of fatherhood by creation: "'We are his children', just as some of your poets have said…" (CEV: Ac.17:28). But it urges a deeper fatherhood, to which the common fatherhood level is spiritually preliterate: "Though God has ignored the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (Ac.17:30). The NT offers people derivative filiality in Christ.[69]

Remember, our Christian familyhood is not based on common filiality, though is for common humanity. Nor is God's fatherhood a projection of human fatherhood, whether that be good, bad, or downright ugly. Word associations can muddy the waters: God as father means God as is biblically, not humanly, defined as father.

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67 The Greek is exactly the same, though the CEV used a polytheistic, *the god and father*, for the former, and a monotheistic, *God the father*, for the latter.

68 Some Christians reject this term; Fritz Ridenour wrote a best seller against it. James contrasted unacceptable to acceptable religion (Jas.1:26-7).

69 Paul loved the term, 'in Christ' (εν χριστω/*en christō*), for Christian identification with Jesus.

Undoubtedly the term can carry emotionally unbearable baggage—perhaps a hatred of fathers. Similarly, the term slave can carry much emotional baggage and conflict, yet can be a liberating concept of great joy: being a slave of Christ Jesus makes one freer than being a human emperor, and richer than a billionaire (Jas.1:9-10). Paul was born free, yet was a voluntary slave of Christ (Ac.22:28; 1 Cor.7:22).

Did you hear the story about a bright girl being selfishly kept from good schooling by her farmer-father, to be merely a lacky on his farm? But even that falls far short of a certain Mr Squeers of *Nickolas Nickleby* infamy (Charles Dickens). In fatherhood terms, God our father is no tyrant, nor uninterested in our wellbeing, nor even a well-meaning father who injures us unintentionally. Drop bad baggage.

And even a nondisciplinary father can injure us. Drop bad baggage. Noting that harsh conditions might require harsh discipline within families to survive the conditions, in easy conditions fathership can go the other way. Opposite and equal errors? Smail was onto it.

"If the severe and authoritarian ancient image of paternity in Israel needed to be corrected in terms of the love and compassion of one who received the prodigal, so the modern image, indulgent, non-prescriptive, often detached and unsupportive, needs to be corrected in a different direction" (Smail 61).[70]

But in seeing that the heavenly father is awesomely above, but not below, human standards, let us not feel unacceptable to him, though our behaviour and attitudes may well be. He gave his beloved son for us, who was thrilled to be given for us, and co-gifted himself to us to bless us without payback. Our human families can gain from us; deity cannot gain from us. We are the needy, vitally needing the father and his son's love, a gift-love able to enrich and unable to be enriched. The direction of this gift is all one way: not from Earth, but from heaven: "No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the son of man has come down from heaven" (NLT: Jhn.3:13).

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[70] Highlighting his *if* I question his picture of Israelite or Jewish fathership, though in hand to mouth households, life *might* require children to live under one roof, and for disobedient working-age sons to be painfully corrected.

And lest any still feel hung up about trusting their father, let it be added that God the father has, shall we say, a motherly side. In fact, human genders both spring from God our source: if God has not femininity, then nor can mankind; if God has not masculinity, then nor can mankind. God is not a male, since *male* is a biological category at the chromosomal level, a core biological identity, and God is not biological. But on gender bias, Yahweh's feminine commitment to Israel exceeded mere human motherhood in depth (Is.49:15), deeper than any mother, even as he was deeper committed than any father. If in the Gospels we look at Jesus and Mary, we can see their reflections of deity's fatherly and motherly heart.

The femininity of girls/women, comes from and reflects deity; the masculinity of boys/men, comes from and reflects deity. Moreover, the percentages of both genders can vary between the biological sexes, so that a man might be more feminine that a masculine woman at his side, a mix of nature and nurture. High dollops of the gender of the complementary sex, should not trouble any into rejecting their own sex, whatever the woke agenda requires for its ideological or commercial advantage, and whatever the suffering it is prepared to inflict on its victims.

Sometimes the fatherhood theme falls flat because of simply having been overlooked. God the father never overlooks his children. Yet as a pastor, Smail saw that PKs, Pastors Kids, can have a very particular resentment of God's fatherhood, if their human role model has sidelined them as children, in favour of God as father and boss. David Wilkerson, who began *Teen Challenge*, wrote a book called *I'm Not Mad at God*. He had believed that God demanded 100% of his working time, even of his family time. Deep down he resented God's fatherhood because he misunderstood it. Ignoring his children—and his heavenly father as father—was his folly, not God's.

In a *Hornblower* episode (Ep.8: *Duty*), Captain Hornblower's mother-in-law compares his sidelined wife to his ship and crew, and asks her son-in-law: "is it too much that you might think of one wife, that you might think of her as your duty too?" Thereafter he gives better time to his wife, and from coming to see her as a duty of care, comes to care more for her. It is ironic, that those modelling God the father most, don't always model him best, gaining perhaps a church but

losing a child. The answer must be in becoming like the father, and that comes from first seeing him as he is.

Regarding creation itself, God the father works/worked with God the son.[71] I avoid speaking of Jesus (God-the-son-incarnate) as co-creator but I am happy speaking of God-the-son-noncarnate as co-creator —with God the father and God the spirit. There was a time when Jesus was not; there was never a time when God the son was not.

To factor in both the truth of the trinity and of the incarnation, it is best to say that Jesus is **not** God; that Jesus is **not** God the son; that Jesus is God-the-son-as-a-human-being, incarnate. We may say that biblical data written in shorthand, should theologically be rewritten in longhand. We may say that it is the message within the envelopes of common speech that counts, not the envelopes. Similarly, parables have many props, but the props help convey the message. A portrait painting can have a background garden, but it is the rose in the centre which we are meant to enjoy.

Jhn.1 only moves to incarnation, to Jesus, at v11 (redrawn in v14). V3 is clear that creation came through the noncarnate λογος/*logos*, God the son: "All things were made through him, and what was made was in no way made without him."[72] Though focusing on the incarnate son, Christ, Paul picked up on the noncarnate son, leaving it to his readers to unpick the distinctives.

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71 In fact appropriate time language can be difficult, for although from our perspective the universe has a past, a floating present, and a future—a timeline—deity itself is beyond the timeline, eternal, not temporal. C S Lewis suggested that we picture deity as a three-dimensional cube, and time-space as a one-dimensional line within the cube—two dimensions below deity. That that picture is imperfect, was his very point: pictures can be helpful but pictures cannot be perfect; the lesser cannot fully comprehend the greater; the greater can fully comprehend the lesser.

72 For the science of how God created, we can enjoy a sketch of how longterm atheist, Anthony Flew, converted to Big Bang theism:deism (Flew). In Old Earthism, Earth is datable in the billions of years. Overhauling the evolution debate, Perry Marshall's *Evolution 2.0* (2015), shows that science backs intelligent evolution, not random evolution, and not intelligent design. God frontloaded, coded in, design and creativity.

"The son is exactly like God, the invisible one. He existed before anything was created, and is supreme over all creation. In him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, whether visible or invisible. Whether they are thrones or powers. Whether they are rulers or authorities. All things were created through him and unto him" (Col.1:15-6).[73] Unto him, towards him, carries the idea of ultimate focus, meaning, even as all things cohere, make sense, in him (17).

We can see that the father has worked through his son in creation, as he also has in salvation. When it comes to the latter, material details about how the son has worked, have come thick and fast through the NT documentation. Busy with such data, some overlook the father's input, focusing only on the incarnate son. Jesus focused on the father. Let us also see the father who has gone global, creating a new age and giving hope for an ultimate age to come.

Key terms, such as *salvation*/*saved*, and *kingdom*, have been deemed to mean many different things. Indeed "unless we have some norm to define what salvation means, the whole matter gets lost in a woolly cloud of relativity where we hardly know what we are talking about" (Smail 68). It is basic to define our terms.

For instance, Smail disagreed with Hans Küng (*On Being a Christian*). Is *salvation* universally accessible, ie, without evangelism? Küng said Yes, and Smail said No, but in what sense of the word, salvation?

If we define it as people entering into God's everlasting kingdom after their death, then we may ask, Before death, can human beings receive their ticket to heaven, without knowing that it comes from Christ, perhaps even rejecting his claims? And let's be fair, through evangelism many hear his claims but reject them, perhaps having lacked pre-evangelism (which includes apologetics). Misunderstanding

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73 When was Queen Elizabeth 2 born? On the one hand, in some contexts it's fine to say that it was on April 21, 1926. But that conceals that she, as Elizabeth Alexandra Mary—the connecting link—was not born then as queen. She was born queen on February 6, 1952, the day King George 6 died: *the king is dead, long live the queen*. Queenship was a mode of Elizabeth Alexandra Mary. Similarly, we might say in simple that Jesus co-created the universe, but confusingly that overlooks that Jesus is a mode of God the son which began within the universe co-created by God the son noncarnate.

the message, they rightly reject it. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, misunderstanding Mr. Darcy, Lizzy rightly rejected him.

Smail argued earnestly for what is sometimes called, exclusivism; Küng argued for what is sometimes called, inclusivism, that salvation is not limited to evangelism into Christ. *Per* Smail, such salvation would not be "*from* sin, *by* grace, *through* faith in Jesus, *into* new fellowship with the father *in* the spirit" (Smail 68). John Wesley assumed such salvation existed, but did not give it enough thought.

Cutting this Gordian Knot, I introduce inexclusivism, defining God's salvation/kingdom as having both a Level 3 and a Level 4.

With Smail, at Level 3 there is Christian salvation into the Christian Level: exclusivism—*salus tantum intra ecclesia*. That is, sin's legacy which blocked us from God, has by God's grace been removed/ forgiven. This salvation level is dependent on faith in, welcome of, Jesus. That is the only entry point that by grace allows human beings into fellowship with the father *as father*, in the spirit. Christian salvation, spiritual liberation and heavenly enthronement.

So yes, exclusivism is valid. Jhn.14, the 123 chapter, has 1 reference to the general term *God*, and 23 references to God as *father*. In its context, Jhn.14:6 speaks of Jesus as being the exclusive way into the Christian truth of life *with the father*. For such salvation, no other name/authority but that of Jesus, opens it up (Ac.4:12). Some within are given a ministry/job of reconciliation (2 Cor.5:18-20):[74] "…God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin…" (NLT: 21).[75]

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74 Paul focused on non-Christian reconciliation to God, but pleaded also for intra-Christian reconciliation to expedite the former.

75 With Douglas Moo and N T Wright (Scorgie, Strauss, & Voth 371,379), I no longer buy into the idea that Jesus actually became sin. The NLT leads the way. The CEV's fudge avoids the error but misses Paul's point. The ERV/NIV footnotes get it right. The CEB/LEB/NABRE/NCV/NKJV/NRSV haven't even begun. The Greek ἁμαρτια/*hamartia* might seem to say *sin*, but the term in OT use could double as *sin-offering*—or restoration/reconciliation offering, depending how *ḥattat* was translated. Theology must decide. Smail followed

"If there is one absolute for Christians it is that our salvation is uniquely in the name of Christ" (Smail 69). There is exclusive blessing for the tree within the wood: **Level 3** salvation unto God as father. For that Cornelius needed evangelism. For that Peter bothered to go. Let us not relativise the absolute of Christian salvation *of knowing Christ*.

With Hans Küng, at **Level 4** there has always been global access to an everlasting salvation unto heaven to come: inclusivism. That is, because of the cross, even if untold or misinformed about it, people from the rising of the sun of human history, to the going down of the same, can enter God's everlasting kingdom after death.[76] "The grace of God is universal in extent and intent" (Smail 69). There is inclusive blessing for the wood of trees. For that Cornelius did not need evangelism. For that Peter hadn't bothered to go. Nor for that matter had Ethnic Israel ever been incentivised to evangelise. Ruth entered; Naomi had dissuaded. Let us not absolutise the relative of Christian salvation *of knowing God*.

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Let us see the father's will and love through his son's eyes.

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the old line (127, 133).

And I reject the connected idea that Christ *became a curse* for us. "The messiah redeemed us from the curse pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf" (CJB: Gal.3:13). Likewise, NOG/NLT/NMB.

[76] My *Israel's Gone Global* (2018), and *Salvation Now and Life Beyond* (2024), cover various ideas of how that can be, without falling back on Universalism or Annihilationism.

Chapter 6

The Father Sees the Son

Jesus has always known his father

The former chapter is somewhat upwards, particularly as the incarnate son showing who his father is. This chapter is somewhat downwards, particularly as the noncarnate father showing us who his incarnate son is: only the father fully knows who his son is.

Islam refuses to submit to the idea of Allah being a father. Needless offence is not needed; biblical offence can be needed. To speak the truth in love, though we be slain, let us keep in mind that sonship—and familyhood in general—exists in many senses. For instance, God could adopt King David's son Solomon to be his royal son for a season and a reason (1 Chr.28:6). In the Ancient Near East, covenants between equals were described in sibling terms (eg brotherly), and friendly covenants between greater/lesser nations could be described as father/son relationships (Hos.11:1).

In Hollywood, an older man might call an unknown young man, son—at least in the older Westerns. In Rome, a young ecclesiastical priest might be called, Father, and might call an unknown elderly woman, daughter. In a welcome-belief relationship with Jesus, Christians too are called sons or daughters (2 Cor.6:18), children of God (Jhn.1:12)—but always plural, never *the* son.

We can stray off the biblical path, misusing filial terms, misvisualising our relationships. For example, having spoken of being a son among his sons, in *Now Are We* (1990), Kayla Parker crossed both gender and deity boundaries, and sung that she was chosen to be deity's *son*. Adding confusion—though specifying the father—she called him both *lord* and *prince of peace*, perhaps thinking him to be his own son, which turned out to be, herself. So a lot of misvisualising by Kayla, throwing biblical terms willy-nilly into the pot for a bigger mess of pottage than Esau's. She was far from being the only such singer, so we should not chuckle.

Jesus as the son retains an exclusive relationship, a deificity we cannot share. But at a human level, he relates with Christians to God the father in an inclusive way, too, which Christians enjoy because of him. Yes, we are siblings of Jesus, having in some ways a similar filial relationship with the father, but in some ways a dissimilar, since in essence we are not deific: the incarnated son was and is.

Only Christians see the father, and in seeing the father we should see ourselves, the father being our primary identity. At rock bottom, who am I? Whoever is in Christ, is a messianic child of God. Tortured by the Nazi Gestapo, this Christian insight personalised to each Christian, helped sustain Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Smail 73-4).

It is a great biblical image, and we tend to prefer it to seeing ourselves as stones—like Peter? But being stones is a great biblical image too (1 Pt.2:4-5). As Karen Jobes put it, Christians are living, sacred stones. That implies that our nature "derives from the nature of the resurrected christ" (Jobes 148), the resurrected stone, reminding us of suffering and rejection. Yet we can glory in unjust suffering, since as stones of God's global temple we are "the place of God's earthly dwelling by the Holy Spirit, a place of true worship and of acceptable sacrifice" (Jobes 148).

Paul made a similar point about churches as temple-shrines of the spirit (2 Cor.6:16), contrasting them to Ethnic Israel (Lv.26:11-2). And in microcosm, each Christian is a temple-shrine (1 Cor.6:19), a sacred space to which unholy prostitution is akin to the exodian sin where "one prince of Israel brazenly copulated with a woman, likely a Midianite priestess of the Baal cult, in boldest daring, in the very proximity of the place for the worship of Yahweh" (Allen 2012:97-8). She sought to adulterate Yahweh's covenant.

But back to the fathership theme, of course when John introduced that idea—Jhn.1:12—it was before the cross. There it meant that even those who welcome-trusted Jesus before understanding him to be messiah by resurrection (*pre-evangelism*), by that initial welcome-trust had an option right to later *become children of God* through Christ. The upgrade was provisional upon the atonement to be.

You can be authorised to go through the door, waiting in the queue with your ticket, but you can only enter once the door is open. This verse used to puzzle me. As a Christian, was I *already* a child to God,

or was I *to become* a child of God? Finally, the penny dropped. Historically, only after the cross could believers before the cross, become Christian-level children of God, and know the father as the son knew him, beginning with women as the first Christians (Mt.28:1; Mk.16:1).[77] Nowadays, at our initial welcome-belief in messiah we become children of God, since the messianic door stands open.

There was however a sense in which his welcome-followers could be his spiritual family before the cross. The Eleven were among such who believed in him before he was raised from death (Mt.28:10 αδελφοι/*adelphoi*; Mt.12:49-50). Let us call them—unlike many of the pharisees who were siblings of Judas (Jhn.8:44)—siblings at the Sinai-level of God's fatherhood. Jhn.7-8 (jumping script numbered as 7:53–8:11) covered Sinai siblings and non-siblings, and the former *would be* set free by the truth/reality of the cross, *if* they held to him into the new covenant age, becoming siblings under the new covenant. They could not be set free *before* the cross, the Great Emancipation.

As children of the new covenant, Yeshuic children, we can come under great suffering. At Gethsemane, Yeshua cried out who he was, by crying out that God was his father/abba (Mk.14:36). He knew who he was. Searching for identity, some today look inwards to psychiatry to find their core; some look backwards to their roots; some hide themselves in nationalism, as meaningless leaves hidden in a meaningless wood; some look to existential achievements—*ago ergo sum*—to define them as somebodies, not nobodies.

God's one-of-a-kind son incarnate, knew his heavenly father at his core, had inheritance roots through his mother's husband to King David, and of course, through his mother, DNA roots even back to

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77 A small group, minus Mary Magdalene who had hurried off to report her fear that the body had been stolen (Jhn.20:2). Perhaps "the most difficult single problem is the apparent flat contradiction between the appearance to the women in Mt.28:9-10 and the unqualified affirmation that 'him they did not see' (Lk.24:24)" (Ladd 93). While Ladd showed a good harmonisation of the Gospel accounts (91-3), I do not see that Lk.24:23-4, affirming that the Emmaus duo hadn't see the risen christ, denies that those women had seen the risen christ—underreporting?

Adam, and even prophetical roots back into *Genesis*. God's son had come particularly to his own world, and particularly to his own people, the Sinai people, thus combing globalism with nationalism, Adam with David. "He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him" (CEV: Jhn.1:11). Once his mission began, he did not hide himself but became the first tree of a new forest. His works showed who he was, and made his fame but not his frame.

On this latter point, Smail rejected the ancient Christology of Adoptionism. Adoptionism asked, *In what sense is Jesus God's son?* Paul of Samosata[78] answered that God simply took Yeshua, a godly man, a better than Solomon, and called him, son, adopting him into messiahship, and like with Solomon calling it a father/son relationship—that there was a time when Jesus was not God's son

Adoptionism might be an upward step for Muslims to get to the top of the biblical revelation of Christ's sonship, to get a foot above the scandalous and silly idea—which they rightly reject as 'bathwater' though they wrongly throw out the 'baby'—that God could only have a son through physical sexual intercourse. It can speak in love but not in truth. Jesus was more than any non-deific, godly man adopted to be a messiah.

Even as did/does the incarnate son, so we as carnate creatures also depend on the father to define us as children of his, and thus as brothers or sisters—siblings—of God's son, and to each other. Paul of Tarsus illustrated *our* familyhood by the idea, adoption.[79] This fits in with the idea of God's Image (*Imago*). Adam/Eve represent the initial corporate Image. It is tempting to call them Beta Stage humanity. The NT shows that the true Release version is the Second Adam, God's son as a human being. Identified with him, we are in Christ's image, his likeness, a multiplication of brothers and sisters under his headship: "…God knew his people in advance, and he chose

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78 Paul of Samosata spoke of the Logos, coming into a normal man, Jesus, to commandeer him as christ—like a virion into a cell, in today's terms.

79 Rm.8:15 (Level 3 adoption), Rm.8:23 (Level 4 adoption); Rm.9:4 (Level 2 adoption); Gal.4:5 and Eph.1:5 (Level 3 adoption). Children by adoption—Paul's term. This adoption was never limited to sons.

them to become like his son, so that his son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (NLT: Rm.8:29).

Some Christians, however, hold to Adoptionist Christology. Some would call them heretics, not Christians. I think Christological Adoptionism is too superficial with the data. I hold that Jesus' function flowed in line with his ontology as Second Adam, that true to himself Jesus did what he was, but by the spirit, as can we. Martin Luther likened mankind to a drunk who, having fallen off his horse on the one side, clambers up and falls off it on the other side. Let's be sober and avoid an opposite idea, Apollinarianism—that Jesus did his miracles by his own deificity. If that's how he did *his* miracles, how on earth do we do *our* miracles? Adoptionism and Apollinarianism are opposite errors.

Before his birth, was Jesus aware of his heavenly father as his father? We can hazard a guess. If the unborn John could sense the presence of Jesus (Lk.1:41),[80] perhaps the unborn Jesus could sense the presence of his father. Sensory awareness. Still, if we mean mental awareness, I feel that the answer is No, that his awareness was, shall we say, under a cloud, perhaps likewise at Golgotha (Mk.15:34).[81]

Was he who did not know who had touched him (Mk.5:31), who did not know the hour of his return (Mk.13:32), not under a cloud between him and omniscience? Is that not a mark of true humanity, of limitation? If so, did light break through that cloud—or that cloud roll away—slowly, or suddenly? Certainly, by the age of twelve, he had that certain awareness (Lk.2:49), that filial awareness. Had that developed to that point through prayer, through the scriptures, through the spirit? We are not told.

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80 Elizabeth was filled in a pre-Pentecostal way, not baptise-filled in a Pentecostal way, since the spirit had not yet been given in a new covenant way (Jhn.7:39).

81 "His very first recorded word in this Gospel, like his very last at the cross, was about his relationship to his father" (Smail 76). Incidentally *pace* Smail, I'd favour *house*, rather than *business*, in the text of Lk.2:49. Surely it was about where he was, not what he had been doing?

But his mission, his business, had not begun. Talk of boyhood miracles is for the birds, non-Christian legends filling in the silent years with flights of fantasy. About 18 years later, we meet him on the banks of the River Jordan, urging John to baptise/immerse him. The prophet John knew him as a cousin, as heir of David, as outstandingly holy in character, but not as messiah. John's mission was purely national. It was to benefit any fellow Jews who repented of their coldness towards their covenant, and wished to prepare themselves for messiah—water baptism was *with reference to* (εις/*eis*) their prior repentance, a witness to it.[82]

John knew that Jesus was zealous for the covenant, so not needing to repent. He did not know that for Jesus, baptism was nevertheless required in order for his mission, both for public witness to whom he himself was, and that he was part of the prophecy about an Elijah type prophet, preparing Yahweh's new way. Perhaps in two minds, John nevertheless baptised Jesus, and received messianic revelation.

Then followed a voice from heaven, which had a dual function. It was not, incidentally, the Daughter of the Voice (Bath Qōl), but the Father's Voice (Abba Qōl); direct, not an echo, as the father broke his silence. The Gospels translate the meaning both ways. Elsewhere we read of a heavenly thunder which some but not all, thought to be from God. Perhaps here, too, few besides John heard the words—John certainly took up the theme (after the visual), though his idea of what messiah's mission was, was off base. The term *son*, had sometimes functioned for the anointed one long sought, as in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q172).

To Yeshua the words came as personal affirmation at his empowerment, his activation, what some would call his anointing. To others the words came to whosoever had 'ears to hear', that there before them stood his beloved son. As D A Carson put it, the Gospel writers heard correctly and happily penned the *ipsissima vox*, the

82 The most helpful MEVV on the purpose of John's baptism are the CEB/ERV/NCV/NLT. The CEV is worst.

exact *voice*, not necessarily the exact *words—ipsissima verba—* having a certain elasticity in how they functioned.[83]

Incidentally, "just as the voice in Mk.9:7 did not imply a second adoption of Jesus as the son of God, so the voice [in Mk.1:11] should not be interpreted as implying Jesus' adoption as the son of God" (Stein 113). The titles *christ*, and *God's son*, were used of Jesus before his water baptism (Mt.2:4,15; Lk.2:11). So, if we take the words to echo Ps.2:7, we must be aware that Jesus was already God's son, which had not been the case for the psalmist. Christ's sonship was uniquely incarnate.

The theme of filiality and water baptism, relates also to us, in that Christian water-baptism relates us to the themes of calling, and of death, burial, and resurrection to new life (Rm.6). In these ways we can know the father as our father. But water-baptism is not the underlying fact, though it dramatizes that fact. Christians who are not water-baptised, are still children of God as father. Christian Salvationists need not fear,[84] and all Christians should live daily in the light of these baptism themes.

The second occasion where the heavenly voice spoke of Jesus as being his son, was perhaps on Mount Miron (Mt.17:1?). Much is of interest here, not least the Greek text which speaks of Jesus' spiritual exodus (Lk.9:31: εξοδος/*exodos*). This connects to Hos.11:1, Yahweh's calling of his child out of Egypt—the social exodus. In a very real sense, Christians are those called out from spiritual Egypt, the kosmos,[85] and as children of God the father, walk in an awareness of travel (exodus), and an awareness of rest (Canaan).

Also of note, is that God's son heard from God his father, and was to be heeded. Likewise, we should hear from, and be heeded (Lk.9:35).

Gethsemane was also a place which highlighted, under pressure, the father-son relationship. Smail cited Lk.22:43, but be aware that the authenticity of that text is questionable. However Mk.14:36 is not in

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83 Carson 2010:288. Sadly, this revision failed to update gender terms.

84 Some helpfully get water-baptised as obedient identification.

85 A Greek term, often with a biblical sense of human opposition to God.

doubt: Yeshua used a very familial—not infantile—address of God as father, *abba*, which sunk deep into church psyche.

And after his psychological victory at Gethsemane, he faced the bigger battle of Golgotha. Smail favourably cited Lk.23:34, aware that its authenticity is questionable, but assuming that at least it highlighted the father relationship which Jesus held to under pressure.[86] This aside, however much Jesus might have experienced desertion, severance, he ended his dying by affirming his sonship (Lk.23:46). With God as father we may suffer; with God as father we can rest in confidence. We can, like God's son incarnate, appeal all our issues to "the final court of appeal" (Smail 81).

This is not to say, however, that we must simply suffer in silence. On the cross Jesus suffered, true, but behind the scenes he was fighting a battle. Was it simply his dying, that brought atonement? That the old symbolism of atonement animals would suggest. Or was it the winning of that inner struggle against darkness, a blow by blow victory which his spoken words hint at?[87]

Put another way, had he been slain unwillingly, resistingly, would his death have wrought atonement? Or was it the total commitment of our champion in that struggle within that dark domain? As should we with whatever cross we ~~wear~~ bear, he, "because of the joy awaiting him…endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honour beside God's throne" (NLT: Heb.12:2). Yes, his was an altruistic death, but that does not preclude being encouraged by future joy. Children of God should forego neither altruism nor personal hopes. Beyond the veil there is Abba.

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86 Theologically it is difficult to square a Universalistic forgiveness, with the prerequisite of repentance (see Lk.17:3). And the suggested harmony with Stephen's prayer (Ac.7:60) is not an exact fit. Textually Lk.23:34 was added—or subtracted—later. Authentic or not, it would not have guaranteed forgiveness into the life yet to come, nor into the church, and at most asked that they (?) would not be forbidden to access God as father.

87 For instance, resisting the temptation to selfish concern, his selfless concern for others was seen in his uniting his mother and John to comfort each other.

The father and spirit have shown us the son

And it was Abba, his father, who revealed who he, the son, was. It was his plan to highlight his son. Facing a criticism that he, Jesus, was the only one speaking up for himself (CEV: Jhn.8:13), he replied that his father was the second legal witness (18). They looked around for Joseph, overlooking God the father (19). They could neither see the son through the father, nor the father through the son.

In Jhn.5:31, he had obviously not meant that if he said anything about himself, it would be untrue. In context, even as he could do nothing authoritatively without his father's backing (19,30), so he could speak nothing authoritatively without his father's backing, a backing which could be seen by miracles, and by his reliance on Scripture.[88] Thus behind the miracles by the spirit we see the father. Behind the revelation to Simon Peter, we see the father (Mt.16:17), sharing a little more of the plan with him. Similarly, a true grasp of Jesus as lord, is by the spirit (1 Cor.12:3), and so from the father.

People being given[89] to the son, was by the father (Jhn.6:37), and seemingly ου μη εκβαλω/*ou mē ekbalō* means, *will keep in* (Carson 1991:290).[90] That is, the son could be trusted to play his part under the father. But "the action of the father does not exclude…the necessity or genuineness of the human activity, but precedes, enables, and sustains, it" (Smail 83). We should not throw away the idea that those the father would give, would be those open to be given. Indeed, in context we might think that discipleship before the cross, was what he meant. After all, that's how his listeners would have read him, and Judas of Kerioth had been given to him, though he was an exception to the rule based on his inner disposition. He alone, as a

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88 Nicodemus accepted the witness of miracles, and that of Scripture—*Rabbi* (Jhn.3:2).

89 The Greek, διδωμι/*didōmi* (give), was also used of the manna from heaven, to which Jesus likened himself (Jhn.6:31,41), so there is a sense in which the father gave his son to those he gave to his son, the true manna of the true exodus and covenant.

90 Perhaps a bit like being asked if you would like an ice-cream on a hot day, when your "I wouldn't say No", means "Yes".

pre-Christian disciple, had been given and not kept (Jhn.17:12), but then, Jesus does not keep in those who wish to get out, but only all those who wish to be kept.[91]

As said, the spirit was also at work in revealing God's son. In speaking with a friendly rabbi who had been ethnically born into God's Sinai kingdom, messiah spoke of the upcoming upgrade, the messianic kingdom, only enterable by God's holiness and spirit (water and spirit), spiritual birth from heaven (Jhn.3:5,7). Surprisingly Nicodemus hadn't had such prophecy on his mind (10).[92] Spiritual birth would be by the spirit, granted by the father on the basis of Christ. Here Smail noted the "incipient trinitarianism" in the NT (Smail 84), an incipience which gradually codified into a church doctrine as the data were slowly weighed up, along with discussions on how best to present a systematic formula resistant to error.

Even from Earth's start, we can see that the spirit has been at work, although he hadn't been given in Christian ways until that way had been begun (Jhn.7:39), and the father was more John's focus before Pentecost. Jesus did, however, introduce him didactically in what we term, the Five Paraclete Sayings.[93] One of these sayings tells us that the spirit would, with us, witness to God's son incarnate (15:26-7).

As to uptake, Smail reminded us that proportionally more Roman slaves than Roman slave-owners, were moved by the spirit into Christianity, hungrier for the offer of liberation. Scratch me where I itch. The Good News, can sound too good to miss. Yeshua invited all who felt parched, to drink (Jhn.7:37). We can even say that God willed certain folk to feel parched.

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91 Similarly, we should think in pre-Christian terms for those whom Jesus had chosen as a rabbi, against the general rule that disciples chose their rabbis.

92 Some have believed that born-of-water, means baptised with/in water, but it goes back to Ezk.36:25-7 and Jr.31:31, and something—unlike then-future Christian water immersion—that rabbis should have had in mind.

93 Jhn.14:16-7,26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 12-5. Elsewhere the spirit *of truth* (το πνευμα της αληθειας: Jhn.14:17/15:26/16:13/1 Jhn.4:6), was, like Jesus, elsewhere called *the truth* (ή αληθεια), an equivalence of status (Jhn.14:6; 1 Jhn.5:6), messianic agents of the father.

But I don't believe that it is or was a case of *dual election*, of God electing without reference to individual psyche, some for ultimate salvation, and some to ultimate damnation, of making from a dark pool as evil as could be, some slaves so that they would welcome the true liberator, and some to be slave-masters, so that they would not. It was and is the case that some, by the one spirit, were and are more likely to enter Christ's kingdom *on earth*, by psychological openness, God's choice based on their openness (1 Cor.1:26; Jas.2:5-6). Some slave-owners took up the offer too, for inner openness/closedness is based on more than social circumstances. Above the social plane, there is true freedom and true slavery. Or is it all pie in the sky?

C S Lewis, speaking to a pagan about the Freudian idea of wish-fulfilment, noted that some became Christians in line with their wishes, that some became Christians in spite of their wishes, that some became Atheists in line with their wishes, that some became Atheists in spite of their wishes. Wish-fulfilment is a funny fish.

"My own position at the threshold of Christianity was exactly the opposite of yours. You wish it were true; I strongly hoped it was not. At least, that was my conscious wish: you may suspect that I had unconscious wishes of quite a different sort and that it was these which finally shoved me in. True: but then I may equally suspect that under your conscious wish that it were true, there lurks a strong unconscious wish that it were not. What this works out to is that all that modern stuff about concealed wishes and wishful thinking, however useful it may be for explaining the origin of an error which you already know to be an error, is perfectly useless in deciding which of two beliefs is the error and which is the truth. For (a.) One never knows all one's wishes, and (b.) In very big questions, such as this, even one's conscious wishes are nearly always engaged on both sides.

"What I think one can say with certainty is this: the notion that everyone would like Christianity to be true, and that therefore all atheists are brave people who have accepted the defeat of all their deepest desires, is simply impudent nonsense. Do you think people like Stalin, Hitler, Haldane, Stapledon (a corking good writer, by the way) would be pleased on waking up one morning to find that they were not their own masters, that they had a master and a judge, that there was nothing even in the deepest recesses of their thoughts about which they could say to him 'Keep out! Private. This is my business'? Do you? Rats!

Their first reaction would be (as mine was) rage and terror. And I very much doubt whether even you would find it simply pleasant. Isn't the truth this: that it would gratify some of our desires (ones we feel in fact pretty seldom) and outrage a great many others? So let's wash out all the wish business. It never helped anyone to solve any problem yet" (Vanauken 88-9).

But the psychological is part of the mix, driving/inviting some into Jerusalem, and some out of Jerusalem, whether or not reason is invoked, and sometimes the psychological is sparked by the spirit, the Hound of Heaven, even a holy terror at times, and has a certain blow room to urge selected folk in (Smail 85).[94] Yet he is not irresistible; love is resistible. Through the spirt—if heeded—the father makes Jesus known, who makes the father known.

Filial dependency on the father

The mission of Jesus depended on the father; he had come in his father's name/authority/plan (Jhn.5:43). He and his father were of one will (ἑν/*hen*: Jhn.10:30). Thus, Jhn.6:38 did not deny that his father's will was also his own will ontologically, but underlined his willing obedience to his father.

God's son was sent, becoming Jesus, God's chief apostle (αποστολος/ *apostolos* = sent one: Heb.3:1). "Then I said, Behold, here I am, coming to do your will, O God—[to fulfil] what is written of me in the volume of the book" (AMPC: Heb.10:7). Jesus' actions were both discerning and following, not off his own bat (Jhn.5:19-20). One can but imagine the hours of patient, listening prayer, in which the son was guided by what he saw and heard, as the spirit bade him go. Similarly, the spirit would not come independently—"speak of himself" (KJV), blow his own trumpet—but rather would come dependently, in the father's—and the son's—name, in line with the plan (Jhn.16:12-3).

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94 *Contra* Smail, I would not go so far as to say 'impel'—Saul of Tarsus could have refused conversion, but his own heart, seeking to follow the facts, was ripe for the reaping. Incidentally, Lk.14:23's "compel them to come in" (KJV), is better put as "urge" (CEB), "press them" (LEB)—the socio-economically poor would simply need persuading that a rich man's house was really welcoming them, that the offer was genuine.

That same familyhood should drive us, and our brother has sent us out in his name (Jhn.20:21). The father sent the son. The son sends us. As the father sent his son with the spirit, the son has sent us with the spirit, and we have a direct link to the father too. And the authority we have is, as it had been for Jesus, an authority under authority, a chain of command (Lk.7:8).

And on the cosmic scale, when the son's mission has been fulfilled—the cross being a beginning—he will hand over his success to the father, that God will be all in all. God is not all—Hinduism—but he is all in all, distinct from yet indwelling creation, raising humanity higher into his life. "The affirmation that 'God will be all things in all' (1 Cor.15:28) refers to 'the unchallenged reign of God alone', not some metaphysical absorption" (Garland 2015:16333-4/28025). The latter also underlines that the son is not doing it for his own benefit. That's the attitude, said Paul, that should be in us (Php.2:5). For creation's benefit, the father looks to unite all people under his son, at whose name, *lord*, every knee, willing or unwilling, will bow, to the father's glory (Eph.1:10; Php.2:9-11).

The father spoke through events

Through prayer and the spirit, Jesus could see and hear what the father was showing and speaking. The father also spoke through situations. Jesus could see that his words had various responses, and put that observation into the parable of the soils, a message from the father. Jesus heard stories about lost sheep, and he put that into a story of a lost sheep. In human events, he could see how his father fitted in at the spiritual plane. He could see how his message would provoke death threats, and how events were likely to unfold for him, if he carried on with his message and miracles. He was doubtless tempted to let his people make him their king—after all he was David's heir. But he walked away from that temptation (Jhn.6:15).[95]

Smail made the point that if we "do not know the world we live in, we shall never know what God wants us to do in it; the word of the father

95 His people were generally hoping for messiah to be David's heir, and to shake off Roman occupation by military might, united by their king.

is spoken in connection with the people and events amidst which we live" (Smail 88). Some will be Christians in politics, interested in the wider scene. Most might well be more interested in their local scene.

Jesus could also look back to ethnic Israel's part in salvation history, and what his father had said and done. Jesus' mission was in line with that unfolding plan. When we see how often he referred to the Old Testament, the Tanak, we can better appreciate that. Thus he was already well acquainted with Moses and Elijah, when they came to speak with him about his own exodus.[96]

On this, by the way, here's a little bit from Hakes 2020:88-9. [What of Moses and Elijah (Mt.17:1-13//s)?[97] Not least because performing in darkness was certainly much easier in his days, Gasson questioned the assumption that this was an open-air séance. Matthew gave no details of ectoplasm, or of lively songs used to stimulate good vibrations. And what about these visitors from the past? Moses abnormally had had his dead body buried by Yahweh; Elijah abnormally had had his living body transported above in some tornado-like experience, seemingly bypassing normal death.

Both experiences pretty unique—not paradigmic—which was what the transfiguration was, too![98] The abnormal is hardly the stuff to base any normal séance on. He also noted that like Samuel, Moses and Elijah returned to speak of death. We could go on. Jesus himself glowed (trans-incarnate glory?); the spirits spoke to *him*—not to any 'sitters'; treating Jesus and the visitors equally, Peter offered to build three rough and ready shelters (do materialised spirits need shelters? Had the spirits not taught Peter about materialisation?); and within moments, the visitors had disappeared and the heavenly voice had spoken.[99]

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96 Many a Christian would not know them from Adam, if they visited.

97 Raphael Gasson's *The Challenging Counterfeit*, 1972:73 considers this.

98 Dt.34:5-6; 2 Kg.2:11

99 The father had spoken at Jesus' water baptism. Gasson showed elsewhere that that was not an outdoor séance either. Nor was it a séance when on entering Jerusalem the crowd divided over whether they had just heard thunder or an angel (Jhn.12:28-9).

Gasson could have added that when Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus, he knocked him down in broad daylight, physically blinded him, and told him to await orders (Ac.9). His travelling companions too were knocked down, saw the terrifying light, and fuzzily heard the voice. Hardly the hallmarks of a séance![100]]

The whole exodus remembrance, was seen both as historical and—like many events and institutions—prophetical. And Jesus' own death was, effectively, a historically based spiritual exodus. Prophecy can have a core value, but can wear different clothing in fulfilments new and true, and Passover was one such prophecy reclothed by messiah (1 Cor.11:24-5).[101] And, incidentally, it set up a pattern for us. In Christ, there is a sense in which we are in our exodus, and are in our Canaan (the *true rest* at Level 3; Heb.4:11), and also await our exodus to Level 4, and our Level 4 Canaan, a Canaan as it was meant to be, sin free and abounding in life!

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100 Formally Ac.9:7 clashes in the KJV with 22:9: Wiki characteristically clashes with Evangelicals here. Some take the different cases used for ακουω/*akouō* (that is, genitive vs accusative) to mean "hearing fuzzily a voice" (φωνη/*phōnē*), noise (9:7), compared to not (ουκ/*ouk*) "unfuzzily hearing a voice" (φωνη/*phōnē*), signal (22:9): John Wesley suggested that that was what Luke had meant. F F Bruce wondered if Luke had meant that they had only heard Saul's voice (9:7), not Jesus' voice (22:9). More likely, thought Daniel Wallace, Luke had heard the story from different sources using *akouō* differently (as it can be) but saying the same thing, and retained their respective wordings. Ac.26:13 doesn't say if the sun was or wasn't shining: incidentally lightening can occur in blue skies—bolts *from the blue*. Perhaps cloak and dagger like, Jesus spoke in a thunderstorm, with a close shave lightning bolt blinding Paul, and messiah's voice in the thunder: see Jhn.12:28-9.

101 The KJV of 1 Cor.11:24 (and Smail 104). The Broken Body myth—sometimes still cited at the Eucharist—wasn't in the Latin Vulgate. In English versions, Wycliffe: "…took breed, and dide thankyngis, and brak, and seide, Take ye, and ete ye; this is my bodi, which schal be bitraied [that is, betrayed] for you…." Tyndale: "…and thanked and brake and sayde. Take ye and eate ye: this is my body which is broken for you…." The earliest English version to later exclude it was Sawyer's, in 1858. In our days few major versions even bother to footnote it. Loaves were broken (κλαω/*klaō*) simply to share reminders of Jesus' unbroken body, given for us.

The father spoke through prayer

As said, Jesus prayed a lot and earnestly, whether or not we hold that he even sweat drops of blood—one of the very very few disputed texts of any significance: hematidrosis does happen. Sometimes we overlook that prayer can be two-way communication, times when we are open to speaking to God being times when possibly we are open to God speaking to us. My *Prayer's Gone Global* covers this theme in greater depth. Suffice to say here that the Gospels (and *Acts*) show traces of this two-way prayer, such as does Jhn.12:28: Jesus' prayer and reply were public. Knocked off his horse, when Saul prayed the reply was public (Ac.9:5), a Q&A. Let it be remembered that prayer can be like this, and let it be warned that not every seeming reply into our heads, comes from God.

At Gethsemane, Jesus' "*desire* was submitted to his father's *will*"—he did not "claim in faith" whatever he liked, the latter being a practice which Smail disliked within charismaticism (Smail 90—emphasis added). Smail took it that the cup had to be drunk.[102] I think it depends on what cup it was which Jesus had prayed about, Gethsemane or Golgotha. And, whether authentic or legend, the idea of an angel helping him suggests early belief that in answer to prayer he was actually delivered from the full cup of that night, Gethsemane.

On top of a background knowledge of his will and our situation, the father speaks situationally by the spirit. Over and above using his noddle on given principles as to what to do or say, Jesus could see/ hear his father's situational will "by charismatic insight" (Smail 91).

Let us see God's son through the father's eyes.

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[102] Smail took the cup here to be Golgotha. "In his agony he betook himself to his father to find in him the strength he needed to face Calvary, and to test again his guidance that he must indeed drink that cup—something that could not be decided in principle but only in his grasp of the father's will in that critical and unique situation. He discerned that will in the context of the law and the prophets, with Moses and Elijah, but at the last he received it from his father alone" (Smail 163). So, Jesus had been sure, but not *absolutely* sure?

Chapter 7

See the Father and the Son

A balanced Christology

Having inadvertently dropped a few polytheistic clangers, such as the idea of the son as a "begotten god" (how many gods have we?), and "the god of the New Testament"[103]—again as if there is more than one god (Smail 57,65)—from a focus of the father revealing the son and the son revealing the father, Smail moved to the deificity of the son.

Let me say again, that unqualified talk of Jesus being God, erodes the biblical revelation in various ways. Try out these syllogisms. We note that Jesus was ignorant as to the precise time for his return (Mt.24:36). So, *Jesus was/is God; Jesus was ignorant; therefore God was/is ignorant?* But the text says that the father wasn't ignorant, therefore was/is the father not God?[104] We note that Jesus slept (Lk.8:23). So, *Jesus was asleep; Jesus was/is God; therefore God was/is asleep?* No! Is it not axiomatic that what we can biblically say about Jesus, can be different to what we can biblically say about God?

B is part of the alphabet, is not the whole of the alphabet, is dissimilar to A yet similarly part of its alphabet. God's son is part of the eternal society, is not the whole of that society, is dissimilar to the father yet similarly part of their society. And add to that that

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103 We all have our blind spots. The former gaffe was somewhat excusable, given the then state of textual rethink of the Greek text, and flux over translation. The NKJV (footnote) is among a few modern versions to evidence this egregious blunder over Jhn.1:18. But in fact *monogenēs* never meant *begotten*, nor does *unique god* cut the mustard, though *uniquely God*, is close. The latter gaffe, frequent in Smail's insightful book, is excusable as twisted leaves from the twisted Christian tree in a twisted wood.

104 I take it for granted that the son noncarnate, and the spirit, eternally know this *hour*.

there is an incarnation into limitation. The simplistic is too simple but nods in the right direction.

If trinitarianism is true—I believe it to be so—then deity is three persons. Imagine you are asked, "Who is Sweden's monarch?" While that monarchy endures, there will be one correct answer, and giving three names for three people, will be wrong. Imagine you are asked, "Who is deity?" There will be one correct answer, and giving one name for one person, will be wrong. The biblical reply is that there is one name, but three people (Mt.28:19), although one named person might truly be used in some contexts to represent their society.

Paul said that in our theology, the father is alone Θεος/*Theos* (deity/God), and Jesus is alone lord (1 Cor.8:6). That was one facet of the full picture, for Peter, John, and Paul, said that in some sense, Jesus was *Theos*.[105] And if God the son noncarnate has never slept, are we then saying that God the son as-a-human-being, never slept, or are we again drawing a biblical distinction being the atemporal state of God the son, and the temporal state of him? [106] We must neither underplay Jesus' humanity nor his deificity (his deity-link).

Smail rubbished the idea of ontologically—as regards Jesus' *being*, his *ontos*—simply deeming him to have been merely-human-without-deificity, merely *adopted* to service as God's son, as we might say that Moses once was, or was King Solomon, or King Cyrus. That is merely Functional Christology, someone functioning as God's anointed one for some time and some role.

No, in showing us his son, the father was showing us himself, his deity, and *Hebrews* contrasted Jesus to Moses as son to servant, a

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105 See my *The Word's Gone Global*, ch.10.

106 C19 Wolfgang Friedrich Gess (Lutheran), failing to draw this distinction, argued that a preincarnate God the son, essentially flowed only in time (as presumably therefore, did both the father and the spirit), and was voluntarily placed for 30 plus years on Earth, years in which he was away from the father and the spirit. Was it thus a type of Deific Suicide, both dying to the trinity—it reduced to a binity—and dying to his noncarnate life and consciousness, though knowledge of the former life gradually flitted back to him? It was not, IMO, one of the better Kenosis Christology ideas.

difference in quality. And indeed, Jesus' work was more fundamental and global than Moses'—indeed even cosmic. Islam is a Functional Christology, honouring Jesus merely as an agent. And some calling themselves Christians, agree with Islam on this.

In himself Jesus was indeed a window unto deity—"...the image of God the invisible one" (as N T Wright translated)—he radiates, as well as reflects, deity. He is not merely one of many *telescopes* helping us to see God—as astronomers see stars—nor even simply the only or best telescope. Using that metaphor, we may add that he is also a telescope through which we see him. But that does mean that in seeing him, we are not seeing his humanity. In fact a telescope, looked through the opposite end, functions a bit like a microscope, helping us see something of stardust on earth. The lens of the incarnation, looks both ways, from the incarnate to the noncarnate, and from the noncarnate to the incarnate.

This can seem, and truly it is, complicated. Even an atom can seem, and indeed truly is, complicated. The early church councils focussed a lot on trying to come to grips with the NT data, and to draw up some formulations to hold them in tension. A bit like a triangle, we may say that on the one hand there is A, on another hand there is B, and on the other hand there is C, and that they all hold together. "The church...learned the hard way...that simplicity in Christology can be purchased far too expensively if it is destructive of the heart of the gospel" (Smail 96). But it failed to press home, from *Jesus is God*, to *Jesus is God the son*, to *Jesus is God the son as a human being*.

This issue is brought more into focus if we ask how, by his death, Jesus could if merely human, atone for humanity. Or, for that matter, how could he have been sinless, unless such is possible from conception for any merely human being? And here we include sins of attitude, for indeed all sin is at heart attitudinal, not merely mistakes of mind or of intellect or of hand. And no one in their right mind would accuse a lion of sin for stalking and killing a human being, but they might accuse a fellow human being for doing the same. Sinful attitudes lead to sinful results. Jesus atoned because of what he was: *operari sequitur esse* (operation follows being).

It was against Functional Christology, that C S Lewis suggested an idea which he later simplified into a trilemma. Lewis' setting had

highlighted the issue of forgiveness: Christ "claimed to forgive sins: any sins. Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic. We can all understand how a man forgives offences against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other people's toes and stealing other people's money?

"Yet this is what Jesus did. He told people that their sins were forgiven, and never waited to consult all the other people whom their sins had undoubtedly injured.... This makes sense only if he really was the god whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin. In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words would imply what I can only regard as a silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other character in history" (Lewis 2002:52).

Besides issues about calling Jesus *God*, or defining God as a god, I deem that Lewis 1# underplayed that Jesus functioned—as we can—by the spirit, not by his deificity—as we can't—and 2# underplayed how situational forgiveness could have functioned as a messianic prerogative alternative to the then accepted exclusive prerogative of Aaronic priests.

In short, all sides believed that it's only God's prerogative to forgive third-party sins (Mk.2:7//Lk.5:21). Some believed that God's exclusive forgiveness was humanly channelled only through priests through sacrifice, who could truly say on God's behalf, "Your sins are forgiven". Thus they believed that Jesus as a non-priestly man, could not truly say on God's behalf, "Your sins are forgiven", and that Jesus' claim must therefore be blasphemy by a madman or badman. They didn't see that messiah's authority exceeded Aaron's. My question to Lewis would be: *Did Jesus forgive such sins as deity, or as functioning as the human messiah, the messianic man?*

Alister McGrath was uncritical of Lewis' conclusion but critical of Lewis limiting the options to mad man, bad man, or deity man. What, say, of those who hold that the words were written onto the lips of Jesus, not a genuine claim by him but thought by early

believers to be what he might have said?[107] Any argument should be robust enough to weather such flak. "The whole section cries out for expansion, and more careful qualification" (McGrath 227).

Functional Christology is a valid subsection of Ontological Christology. For instance, in many of his works Jesus the christ operated not as deific, but with deity, even as prophets had before him, and Christians have after him. Mere miracles are in this category; his atoning death was not. Bearing in mind that Jesus' designation of messiahship, became what we sometimes deem to be a surname, we may say that in Christ we are as christs, χριστοι/ *christoi*, spirit-anointed ones (Ac.11:26; 1 Pt.4:16), in fact, members of the same family. So identified, we should be functional Christians.

But as the one-of-a-kind son, the μονογενης/*monogenēs*, Jesus' function had its taproot in his deificity, as did his mission. What he did before the cross was because he was God's son, was by God's spirit, and was paradigmatic for us. But while on the one hand the Greek of Jhn.10:30 is directly about oneness of will/plan, not about oneness of being, on the other hand "though not a complete affirmation of complete identity, clearly this statement has more in view than a mere oneness of will", and presupposed an ontological link (Köstenberger 312). It was a claim which Moses would not have dared to utter. Hence some, risking Roman wrath, intended to stone Yeshua to death for what seemed to them to be blasphemous, a claim of deificity.[108]

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107 Such indeed would have been as mistaken as when Smail created a quote for Jesus—"What I speak, my father speaks…because we share together in the one divine life, being, and nature" (Smail 98), or when in 1963 Sydney Carter wrote, "I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth / In Bethlehem I had my birth", as if Jesus' words. We should not invent voxdeism, new canon.

On p164, he again engaged in voxdeism in two alternative sayings. The first he said was not what Jesus said; the second he said was what Jesus said. But even if you well word the thoughts of Jesus, don't put them 'on his lips'.

108 Jhn.10:34/Ps.82:6 probably referred to "Israel at the time of the giving of the

Inspiration within incarnation

At most we operate as non-deific persons under deity, with deity, and through deity, without becoming deity. The OT prophets, under deific inspiration, could truly proclaim, "Yahweh says". But they did not become Yahweh. They were, as we are, simply in the picture of God's universal and living canvass. But if God the artist has painted himself into the living picture, his self-portrait would live as he would live—if a creature.

The idea of the incarnation is that that is what deity has done. God the son incarnated himself into the living picture, into the motion picture, and therefore the picture of himself has spoken as a mortal picture, and speaks as an immortal picture. So his words have been and are as a creature, yet as having deificity, speaking informed and in perfect line with his beyond-picture fulness.

In line with this, Smail took Yeshua's *But I say*, to reflect deificity itself: "his word was God's word from the very fact that he said it, out of the personal deific authority that he both received from his father but also shared with him" (Smail 99).

That to me rings true for when he spoke with knowledge: the man christ Jesus was the outraying of the eternal noncarnate son of God—himself the outraying of the father (Heb.1:3). Synchronicity. Likewise his anger at the merchants desacralising the temple by attitude, reflected his father's anger at them. Still, within human weaknesses—*I thirst*—he hadn't full situational knowledge—*Who touched me?* But with flawless knowledge he taught from the deific perspective (Jhn.10:30).

This is not to deny that, say, Paul could *in* God's son, speak *by* God's spirit with equal authority *to* God's son. Paul's, "I, not the lord" (1 Cor.7:12), need simply be a comparative not between degrees of

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law" (Köstenberger 315). Jesus outmanoeuvred those boasting in Moses—his own boast in Moses being better placed—by showing how his grasp of Scripture was at least their equal, and that although they were in some sense as God's son/s (Hos.11:1)—Ethnic Israel/ites—how much more would he be God's son, he who did the works of the father? Robbed of their stones, in baffled rage they tried to drag him to court (Jhn.10:37).

inspiration, but between what the lord had already covered to a pre-Christian situation, and what the lord had said through him to a Christian situation.[109]

We may hold that whether Jesus or Paul said, "I say" into the biblical text, they were equally inspired and equally authoritative. And Jesus' "'You have heard..., but I say' was not quite analogous to corresponding rabbinic formulas; Jesus was not simply a proto-rabbi (*contra* Daube; Phillip Sigal's *Halakhah of Jesus*). The Sermon on the Mount was not set in a context of scholarly dispute over halakic details, but in a context of messianic and eschatological fulfilment. Jesus' authority burst the borders of the relatively 'narrow context of legal interpretation and innovation which the rabbis circumscribed for themselves' (Robert Banks' *Jesus and the Law*, 1975:85). It was for this reason that the crowds were amazed at his authority (7:28-9)" (Carson 2010:373).

In that messianic sermon, if Jesus sometimes revoked the letter of the law (so Carson), it was only to show where the spirit of the torah had been pointing, its deeper aspect of attitude.[110] I would liken the crowd's amazement above, to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached (Ac.2:37). For both crowds it was messianic authority bursting through the torah; their New Age teaching replacing their Old Age; the messianic replacing the Mosaic. And yet the apostolic preaching was not merely shared with Christ, but was about Christ—his ontology was central to its core ontology.

We can take this insight into the *I am* sayings of Jesus, but proofed by Jhn.9:9 from assuming that every *I am* was a deity claim! At least his predicated *I am* sayings may rightly, perhaps, be taken to have been hints of his deificity, concealed from foresight but revealed by

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109 C S Lewis had what I'll call a low high-view of Scripture, sadly falling just a tad short—in my opinion—though his Christian obedience was outstanding. One stumbling block was this very text, which he took to assume levels of inspiration (see Michael J Christensen's *C S Lewis On Scripture*, 1989:18).

110 "As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit", confessed Mr Darcy to Elizabeth (Austen 302).

hindsight.[111] After all, although Moses/Elisha had miraculously mediated food (Ex.16:14-8; 2 Kg.4:42-4) only Yahweh had walked on water (*Job* 9:8; Hab.3:15), said Smail. That said, Peter subsequently showed that mere mortals could walk on water—by the spirit if in Jesus' name. With hindsight, Peter perhaps saw that what Yeshua had done by the spirit, had also hinted at his ontology.

Generally, his *I am* sayings did not raise general suspicions of deific claims.[112] For instance Jhn.6:35 raised some scoffing and questions about his sanity, but it didn't raise blasphemy charges (41-2). Later *I am* sayings to his apostolic band, likewise did not presuppose his deific identity (10:7,9), but did presuppose his messianic identity—though still his disciples expected messiah to win by might, not to lose by crucifixion. That they opposed his idea of being killed, argues that they did not deem him to be in any sense, deity—deity can't die! As to the idea of incarnation, they hadn't a clue.

The *I am* saying which is exceptional, is Jhn.8:58, for it is the absolute, not the qualified, use: *Before Abraham was, I am*. The story implies a hasty exit (59), since even *God's people* can stone God's people, such as Moses, Aaron, David, and later Stephen and Paul (Nb.14:10; 1 Sam.30:6; 14:19; Ac.7:57-60; 14:19). But a number of sayings were perilously borderline with deificity, and evoked hostility, such as his unique *My father* statements (Jhn.5:17), though thensight perhaps simply read those as functional or adoptive fatherhood (8:41). Only after his resurrection do we see that the message was hitting home, when Thomas exclaimed, "To me you are God and lord" (Jhn.20:28).

But beyond mere Functional Christology, stands the atonement. Jesus' execution was not merely a regrettable tragedy, it was God's battle plan for his son incarnate. Supremely, the message of Jesus was the cross, which was the way for us to be redeemed, and be taken into God's Christian family (Jhn.17:3). And it was the basis for

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111 His predicated sayings are Jhn.6:35 (food); 8:12; 9:5 (light); 10:7,9 (gate); 10:11,14 (shepherd); 11:25 (resurrection life); 14:6 (way, truth, and life); 15:1 (vine).

112 The Hebrew *'anî hû'* (Is.40–55: lit. *I am he*) is εγω ειμι/*egō eimi* in the Greek LXX. Eg 41:4; 43:10,13,25; 46:4; 48:12—see Dt.32:39 (Carson 1991:343).

ultimate salvation, postmortal life with God, for which Christianity offers personal assurance.

Personal assurance of postmortal life with God? Sadly, some believers flatly dismiss the idea of personal assurance of evangelistic—or 'entrance'—forgiveness. Partly because, they say, it can lead to complacency in holiness (*antinomianism*). Will the donkey keep going if no carrot dangles before it? In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan dismissed that charge (made by Ignorance), rightly saying that superior Christianity is not about either assurance or holiness, but about both assurance and holiness—willing horses.

Admittedly it can be a temptation to antinomianism (*Jude* 4). Yet is not the assurance and feel of family status, the best incentive for holiness of lifestyle? In God's son we have a spiritual ontology inspiring our function as family. For those who have accepted God's son, have accepted God his father, the prerequisite for ultimate life.

Ontological Christology—or better, Ontological Huiology—alone gives understanding of what Christ's death accomplished. Could a mere human have ever been born without any bias to sin, and if so, why could not all humans be born without such a bias? And if one mere human could live without having sinned, so needing no atonement for themself, why could not all mere humans, so live without having sinning, so needing no atonement? A mere human did not become God's son.

And God's son became no mere human. He was conceived without bias to sin, the second Adam. As a fresh start he lived without sin, needed no atonement for himself, and died to atone for mere human beings, who susceptible through bias to sin, sin naturally according to their sinful nature. He alone can switch us from the fallen nature, thus enabling heaven for the decontaminated.

And what of deity's grace, if such death on the cross was not by the giving of itself, but by the sending of a mere mortal? If, as 2 Cor.5:14 says, one person died for all, then the one who died must have been uniquely significant, enabling the new creation (17) by becoming the sin-offering on our behalf (21). Deity was personally involved for us, and in the cross we see the loving heart of the father and his son.

The underlying concept is also in Col.1:20. The son is the image of God the invisible one (15), the firstborn of all creation, for in him everything was created (16), and he is the head of the body, the church. He—incorporating his incarnation—is the firstborn from the dead (18). In him God in all his fulness was pleased to permanently dwell (19), and through him to reconcile everything to himself, making peace through the blood of his cross (20). See Wright 65,68-81.

The works and operations of God the son, whether noncarnate or incarnate, whether source or stream, were and are often spoken of in Christian circles by his Christian name, Jesus. But citing 2 Cor.8:9, and underlining the connect/disconnect of noncarnate to incarnate son, N T Wright reminded us that though we might casually call the noncarnate by his carnate name Jesus, the man christ Jesus is not trans-existent (Wright 69).

We could also look at Rm.1:3-4, where he whom we know as Jesus had a truly human persona, descended from King David, but beyond that a deific identity, son of God. Or at Gal.4:4, which speaks of God having sent out (εξαποστελλω/*exapostellō*) his son. Did Paul refer to the sending to Bethlehem, or to Golgotha? Arguably God sent his son to both. Gordon Fee said that "the fact that both γενομενος phrases [that is, born from a woman; born under the law] emphasize the son's human condition, seems to suggest that the sending word presupposes a prior existence that was not human". Douglas Moo agreed that incarnation was probably implied (Moo 438). Or at Jhn.3:16, though Smail used a deficient translation—μονογενης/*monogenēs* means a son (or daughter: Lk.8:42) being one-of-a-kind, not a son begotten. God sent (αποστελλω/*apostellō*) his son into this world for our eternal blessing.

It is a richer experience to partake of the Eucharist, if we realise the elements to represent the body/blood of God's-son-become-human and given for us, not merely of a mere man who died for us. It was the noncarnate Logos (Jhn.1:1) who became carnate for us (14). Such a stupendous sending was in response to a stupendous need—*quantum ponderis peccatum* (how mighty was our sin). For we were

spiritually dead, without hope, without God (Eph.2:1,13).[113] Yet the incarnation exceeds mere forgiveness and mere atonement. It is an everlasting link we have with deity, his ultimate commitment to humanity beyond the needs of the short season of mortality.

Jesus led by the spirit

The truth that Jesus was the spirit-led person par excellence, must not undermine the truth that ontologically he was/is truly deific and truly human. A *both/and*, not a *mere deificity* or *mere humanity*, must be maintained christologically. Highlighting how easy it can be to err on this, Smail suggested that D M Baillie had strayed a little too far from this position, and G W Lampe even more so.

Perhaps significantly, whereas Jews tended to interchange the terms *logos* and *pneuma*, the NT never identified the two, and, using logos of God's son, and pneuma of God's spirit, identified them as two persons of deity, united in will and work. Howbeit the very term, *christ/messiah*, means one anointed by the spirit. And we may see that Jesus was born anointed (Lk.2:11). Thus, we can see the spirit as deity to man, leading and empowering the man christ Jesus.

Spirit Christology can be very insightful, and some consider it to be a foundation for charismatic theology. Here we should put Andre Kempen's *I Lift My Hands* (1989) to one side where it rightly belongs, not least since Andre sang that Jesus *was* the spirit without measure, whereas John sang that as anointed man, Jesus *had* without measure the spirit (Jhn.3:34). Gushy ineptitude has no sound place in church.

As said, Jesus was more than a spirit-filled person, and Jesus was not less than a spirit-filled person, though the term *filled* was within the orb of Sinai—the spirit had not yet come in the NT dimension (Jhn.7:39); spirit-baptism had not yet come. And no OT prophet,

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[113] This term dead (νεκρος/*nekros*), was used by Jesus in dispute with Sadducees. The latter argued that dead meant dead-dead, no kind of life, thus Abraham had no life which could be resurrected to fuller life. In scotching their silly argument based on a silly premise of post-resurrection marriage, Jesus affirmed that Abraham was only dead at a certain level, and alive at a pre-resurrection level to God (Mt.22:32).

priest, or king, had had the spirit fully—but Jesus, the bridge between Sinai and Golgotha, had. Pentecost is deeper and different filling, than Sinai, but not more than the bridge.

And unlike mere humans, Jesus would—under the father—send the spirit in his name, his authority.[114] The father would send the spirit in Jesus' name (14:26), and Jesus would send the spirit from the father, and the spirit would testify about Jesus (15:26). Jesus also promised that from those who believe-welcomed him, the spirit would flow from their deepest being, we might say even their Jerusalem (Zc.14:8), an eschatological flow of spiritual life, celebrated by a water rite at the Tabernacle Festival of his people.

But what spirit-fillings were there before the cross, even granting that they were different in quality as between Sinai and Christian types of filling (Jhn.7:39)?

Perhaps the expression did mean that certain people were by and alongside the spirit, enhanced for various tasks. But nowadays some too readily use the expression, *filled/in*, where *on/upon* yields the better sense.[115] The spirit simply came *upon/on* Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Saul, and David (Jg.6:34; 11:29; 14:19; 1 Sam.10:10; 16:13).

As to Joseph, there is a consensus that Pharaoh spoke of some spirit *indwelling* him, though Pharaoh's pneumatology was such that no theological weight should be put on his thoughts, and being a polytheist he probably meant no more than that the wisdom of the divinities indwelt Joseph (Gen.41:38)—sometimes footnoted (eg NIV).

As to Joshua (Nb.27:18), the wording is probably about the spirit of Yahweh, but possibly about the spirit of leadership (Allen 2012:707).[116]

As to Bezalel, Yahweh said that he had *filled* him with his spirit (Ex.31:3) to build the micro-cosmos of the tabernacle—a sacred

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114 Smail argued for the Filioque Clause (106). I demur, but at the end of the day its authority is merely credal anyway.

115 Eg with Jg.3:10. Vis-à-vis Othniel, the spirit either filled him (ERV), or was in/entered him (CEB/NCV), or controlled him (CEV), or was on/upon him (LEB/NABRE/NIV/NKJV/NLT/NRSV). The more formal are preferrable.

116 Perhaps "a man of spirit" (NABRE), or "the spirit of leadership" (NIV).

compound—granting wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. "This is the only explicit mention of anyone in the exodus community being 'filled' with 'the spirit of God'" (Alexander 2017:106).

So, although allowing a difference in meaning, the terminology does predate Pentecost. Indeed, the NT joyfully affirms this. "All three members of [one] family are said to be filled with the spirit…. [and] the infilling…was expressed vocally and prophetically" immediately by the parents and later by their son (Petts 26): Lk.1:15,41,67. Before Christianity the spirit had come, yet had not come *in a Christian sense*. Before Christianity the spirit had filled, yet had not filled *in a Christian sense*.

Before Christianity, biblically those spirit-filled were filled for Sinai functions, and no abiding fullness was suggested along the lines of being full once their mission was ended. Their fulness was neither as the anointed one who had the spirit without measure, nor exactly the same as, though in some ways suggestive of, those filled on the Day of Pentecost under the new and living way/exodus (Heb.10:20).

And when we move to new covenant spirit-filling, we see a new dimension, yet still distinct from the unmeasured access to the spirit which messiah had enjoyed. Pentecostals often note the probable unifying factor of glossolalia as the biblical related evidence of spirit-filling, of spirit-baptism. Here we may simply note the presumption that spirit-filling under the new covenant, is different from spirit-filling under Sinai—the spirit had not been given. Being unique missionally and ontologically, Jesus as messiah was given the abiding spirit without measure, exceeding all prior fulness.

Let us briefly consider Jesus as the baptiser in the spirit, and this as a distinctively new covenant phenomenon in the father's will. The Baptist knew that the messiah would baptise, but not at first that his cousin Jesus was the messiah. It is likely that John misunderstood such baptism(s), even as he misunderstood messiahship (Mt.3:11; 11:3).[117] We do not see Jesus baptising before the cross, other than in/

[117] Carson 2010:281 supports the idea that fire/spirit meant that the spirit-

with water, and John's insight seems to have related to a division after the cross, between those included in messiah's kingdom (spirit-baptism), and those excluded from it (fire-baptism).

We may further ponder on 1 Cor.12:13. Put in its historical context of a church big on both spirit-baptism and division, it may be translated as something like, "We were all baptised in one spirit with reference to one body"—value unity. Historically all of them—or a majority all—had been spirit-baptised. And the lowest Christian slave was spiritually level with the highest Christian master.

1 Cor.12:13 uses the identical Greek prepositions as Mt.3:11: John baptised "*in* water *with reference to* [prior] repentance". So, did Paul remind the Corinthians that they were "baptised in the spirit with reference to their [prior] membership in the church"? It does seem to fit other contexts, such as in Ac.2:38 where hearers were to repent and show it by being baptised in water *related to* (εις/*eis*) their prior forgiveness which followed repentance, after which conversion-forgiveness they could enjoy the gift of the spirit. Luke showed that spirit-baptism came *after* forgiveness but sometimes *before* water-baptism, and sometimes *after* water-baptism (compare Ac.10:47; 19:5).

Against claims that Paul's Letters sorted out a misunderstanding by Luke, there is good evidence that "there is no contradiction between Paul's teaching and the Pentecostal understanding of what Luke [said] in *Acts*" (Warrington 112). But that is not my focus. Suffice it to say that the spirit-filling of Bezalel was not the same as the spirit-filling of Yeshua (same covenant, different ontology), and that the spirit-filling of Paul was not that of Bezalel (same ontology, different covenant), and that God's son, under God the father, baptises Christians in God the spirit. If the father is the reservoir source of the spirit, then Jesus is the stream source of the spirit, both in conversionary and filling

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baptised were fire-purified—one baptism. Alternatively, πυρ/*pyr* (fire) in v11 could have the same destructive force as in vv10,12, meaning in short that messiah would be divisive, separating wheat from chaff, the good fruit from the bad fruit—alternate baptisms/outcomes. Both conflict-account Gospels—*Matthew*/*Luke*—mention fire; *Mark*/*John* do not. If the division idea is correct, Pentecostal tongues of *fire* were incidental to the "and fire" clause.

dimensions, in sovereign co-ordination under the father with the spirit. "The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ, because Christ is the normative archetype of life in the spirit, but also because Christ is the source from whom the spirit comes" (Smail 107).

And surprisingly to foresight, Jesus said that it was better for his disciples that he himself should transfer the baton, for the spirit in his new capacity, would be better for them (Jhn.16:7).

The son's beyondness

Hebrews was written to some Christians who were considering safe options—should they moderate their witness in order to fit in with their legal status of ethnic Jews? It probably begins with the prophet Abraham (Gen.20:7), genesis to their ethnic identity. His spiritual descendants were suffering by being witnesses of Abraham's descendant, the prophesied one, who as messiah had suffered worse than they who were now his people—he understood their pain.

To some extent, messiah's ability to understand and to help, was based on his attribute of beyondness, his deificity. For having spoken to humanity at large and the descendants of Abraham in particular by a stream of prophets, God had in these, the last days, the Christian days, spoken by his son (Heb.1:1-2)—"the finest of the prophets cannot stand comparison with a son as a means of revelation" (Guthrie 63). And what was God's son?

I consider it telling that in line with John's prologue where we meet the noncarnate Logos before we meet the incarnate Jesus (Jhn.1:1,14), so by the writer to the Hebrews we meet the noncarnate son before we meet the incarnate Jesus (Heb.1:2; 2:9), and perhaps a little in-between of the incarnate one unnamed.[118] It is through the noncarnate son, not Jesus, that God the father has created the ages/ worlds, the Big Bang and its laws.

Is Heb.1:8 "ontological language with a vengeance" (Smail 108)? I find it suggestively but not conclusively pointing to the son's deificity.

[118] It is common yet simplistic to, as Guthrie, predicate creation to Jesus.

After all, the psalm had been able to carry a non-deific meaning.[119] If we claim that Jesus is deity because of Heb.1:8, do we claim that David was deity because of Ps.45:6?[120] "Expositors must first listen to the psalm in the context of Israel and refrain from reading only the relationship of Christ and the church into this text" (VanGemeren 396).

Still, the writer took a multiplex approach, knowing about hidden messianic upgrades. Likewise, Is.7:14 would be a mere mortal representing Yahweh, yet subsequent fulfilment would be by a more than a mere mortal representing God (Mt.1:23),[121] even as the mother was upgraded from merely a young betrothed woman in Ahaz' days, to a virgin conception by a betrothed woman in Matthew's days. To his audience, the writer to the Hebrews underlined that their true allegiance was to their true King David.

But although a first reading of *Hebrews* need not make an explicit connection between the psalm and deificity—and indeed the writer's following argument flowed *to* that, not *from* that—a second reading would enable one to see that the psalm had carried a hidden upgrade in sense, a deeper below surface meaning. Whether explicitly or implicitly, Heb.1 is strong on the deity of God the son and on the deificity of God's son as a man.

Some jib at the idea of Jesus having beyondness, either by denying beyondness (Naturalism—q.v. *Miracles*, by C S Lewis), or by assuming that being *no less* than fully human, he could be *no more* than fully human. But accepting the idea of Jesus having beyondness, as

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119 Incidentally the New English Translation footnotes that grammatically, "Your throne is God", is possible. But it adds that "although it is grammatically possible that θεος/*theos* in v.8 should be taken as a predicate nominative, the context and the correlative conjunctions are decidedly against it."

120 If not David, at least a merely human Davidide. "In Hebrew thought the occupant of the throne of David was regarded as God's representative. It is in this sense that the king could be addressed as God" (Guthrie 76).

121 "They were all filled with awe and praised God. 'A great prophet has appeared among us,' they said. 'God has come to help his people'" (NIV: Lk.7:16). They were not calling *Jesus*, God! This highlights that saying that God is with us, can mean present by his agent, not his agent being God.

sunshine connects to the sun, lets us see the father's heart revealed through the incarnating of his son into human history and suffering.

Might we say that Jesus was God's humanity, not man's humanity? Or at least that partaking from Mary of mortal frame from the first Adam, he was conceived as the Second Adam, unfallen humanity? God's light shone incarnationally through Mary without any infestation of a sin bias—which is not to say that she herself was not sin infested: God *my saviour* (Lk.1:47). If we must postulate that she was sinless in character and actions in order to bear a similarly sinless child, must we not postulate that her parents had been similarly sinless born, tracing back a sinless human line to Eve? Eden lives in memory of man's innate weakness to sin.

The church and God's son

Once more we dwell on the whole idea of Christ's connection to deity. As said, besides his connection to his noncarnate self, his beyondness, we must consider his noncarnate self's connect to the father and the spirit. The former is often called Christology; the latter is often called trinitarianism in traditional orthodox circles, the mainstay of the church. In the main they adhere to global—*catholic*—creeds formulated in critical times of discussion across the church table. Creeds were weighty, serious, and sincere, efforts to formulate the biblical data. They were and remain, high quality yet manmade efforts, subservient to the biblical data.

At the risk of wearying some, let me sketch a short history of some of these world councils, of global debate. And firstly of what some call the Council of Jerusalem. Though not ecumenical (that is, summoned from world-wide), this meeting of minds in Jerusalem helped develop the idea of ecumenical councils.

At Jerusalem, the background was the circumcision debate: Did Jesus carry Moses into the messianic age (Ac.15:1)? We know that James, leading the Jerusalem church, sought to avoid unnecessary cultural offence. Like Paul, for the sake of evangelism he would have encouraged male circumcision when within ethno-Jewish borders—where it counted culturally. Seemingly some believers had reckoned that James' risky stance endorsed Moses alongside messiah. They spread that idea into Gentile borders, as if it counted theologically.

Ac.15 shows the need for church-age theology to be done by the church (15:6) based on Scripture, [122] experience, wisdom, and the spirit, though obviously God endorsing Jerusalem's council does not mean that he has fully approved of *every* church council. On this last point, one can see Ephesus being somewhat tweaked by Chalcedon.

Some Ecumenical Councils[123]

Roman Catholicism has generally spoken of 21 ecumenical and infallible councils, though the wider church holds to 7. Indeed Eastern Orthodoxy, *Orthodoxism* for short, has often called itself *The Church of the Seven Councils*.[124] Obviously these 7 + 14 Roman ones, unlike Jerusalem lacked direct biblical affirmation, and to what extent they affirmed the Bible, may be questioned. The *Thirty-nine Articles* doctrinal statement of Anglicanism, allows itself to be fallible, and to be judged by Scripture. Anglicanism highly praises the first four Councils.

Though fallible these Creeds should be pondered well. As a Pentecostal historian well said, "it is too bad that some modern charismatics, majoring on the experiential aspects of the faith, do not see the strong connection between the spirit and doctrine. This problem has provoked some criticism and requires urgent correction. The gifts of the spirit are vital, but so is a biblical and doctrinal

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122 There are many points which can be looked at. Eg it is important to distinguish between the continuality of the principles and discontinuity of the practice of Jerusalem's ruling. On its relationship to *Galatians*, consider the difference between the *South Galatians* and the *North Galatians* theories.

123 I cover the first five. Sometimes put as œcumenical, from οικουμενη/ *oikoumenē* (often meaning the entire Empire). Though East and West church sectors agree with the list of 7 and only with the 7, Roman Catholicism holds that it has held 14 subsequent ecumenical councils. Of these 14 perhaps those of Trent (1545-63) on reform, Vatican 1 (1869-70) on papal infallibility, and Vatican 2 (1962-5) on church renewal, stand out.

124 When we speak of *orthodoxy,* we generally mean what in the West is generally considered true teaching from God through christ through the church. The East has tended to place more weight on right worship than right teaching, arguably teaching the means to the goal of right worship as being glory (δοξα/*doxa*).

undergirding of the faith. Creeds are as important as the charismata" (Allen 2004:25).[125]

This attitude transcends Charismaticism. For instance, in 1976 an Anglican report recorded that for many Anglicans, "the essence of faith is to be found in a life of discipleship rather than in credal affirmations", an attitude traced by some to the Danish Christian existentialist, Søren Kierkegaard (Ives 83). Alas for lopsidedness.

AD 325 / Nicea 1 /Arianism: Not enough equality?

Around the year 318 in Alexandria, Arius as a senior presbyter, pastor, and songwriter, began to teach that there was a time when the son didn't exist. He meant that the son wasn't co-eternal—and was of a different 'essence/substance' (ουσια/*ousia*)[126] to the father. His bishop,[127] Alexander, challenged him in 320, and claimed that the son was co-eternal and consubstantial with the father.

Some bishops believed Arius to be a good believer—and he might well have been—and that his ideas deserved respect, and in-house fighting began. Emperor Constantine, now confessing Christ and in charge of the Roman Empire's harmony, used his civil authority to convene an ecumenical church council in Nicea, to discuss the doctrinal debate. The emperor wished to have a united Empire, but this does not mean that Constantine wished to support the stronger party at the expense of Christian truth. The champion opposed to Arius, was a deacon from Alexandria, named Athanasius.

Athanasius argued that the son was ὁμοουσιος/*homoousios* (that is, the same substance, consubstantial) with the father. Initially, many of the

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125 Both are highly important, ongoing, and fallible.

126 The use of this term *ousia* was probably introduced at Nicea as a yardstick to evaluate the different ideas held. It had a Gnostic background, and though utilised by Origen, it still worried many leaders deep down. For the first time the church raised a non-biblical term to the level of critical importance. This undermined for over 50 years, the good of Nicea.

127 Incidentally ecclesiastical terms had morphed from the biblical base. *Bishop* had become hierarchical, substantially different from local church oversight.

220-250[128] church leaders there, opposed him, thinking ὁμοιουσιος/ *homoiousios*[129] better covered the biblical data—a fundamental difference swung on one iota. The East feared lest philosophical terms such as *ousia* swamped out the idea that the son was a co-eternal *person* with the father. Unlike personal pictures, could substance pictures lead to thinking that the son was simply some substance of the father, backdoor Sabellianism?[130]

Arius could basically accept anything short of affirming that God's son was a co-eternal distinct person with the father. For him, a deity from deity was fine as a different, a secondary substance—but deity from deity as the same, the primary substance, was not. Arius was obviously saying something wrong, but it took some time for Nicea to define what it was which it should deny. Arius' suggestion of ανόμοιος/*anhomoios* (unlike in substance) was fairly easily discounted. The question was more about whether *homoousios*, or *homoiousios*, was the better of two somewhat imperfect terms.

The handful of good theologians representing the West,[131] and the whole group from the East (except two), finally backed Athanasius as headed in the right direction. But while the heresy of Arius was

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128 Some later traditions put the number at 318, influenced maybe by Gen.14:14.

129 It could mean 'in every way of the same substance' and thus imply difference and yet essential unity, or (as Athanasius had feared and thus rejected it at Nicea) 'in some ways of a similar substance' and thus suggest less than deity. On the other hand *homoousios* could be taken to deny the son's individuality!

130 As an aside, C S Lewis raised a similar concern about his image of dimensions (a cube), swamping out the biblical familial pictures of deity: God knows best how to describe himself. It is good to cast our insights into imagery, but "the NT picture of a father and a son turns out to be much more accurate than anything we can try to substitute for it." The trick is not to substitute, but to help explain its pictures by ours playing subservient roles: "but you must always go back" (Lewis 2002:4.4.174).

131 It also, incidentally, introduced the Western theory of the Two Swords—Spiritual and Civil authority. One of these theologians, Bishop Hosius of Cordoba, later begged the Emperor Constantius not to meddle outside his civil authority by usurping church authority. Hosius, and his friend Liberius, bishop of Rome, were consequently deposed.

rightly rejected, the orthodox position was capable of being misunderstood, and was ultimately—in line with Athanasius—later modified. But for long, both Arius and Athanasius subsequently suffered from power politics in the East, knowing the ups and downs of acceptance and rejection, before the faith of Nicea held firm.[132]

AD 381 / Constantinople 1 / Apollinarianism: Not enough humanity?

Regarding God's son, the main issue had tended to be how to clearly put into words, to articulate, his relationship to the father. Nicea had allowed a selection of leaders to debate what the scriptures taught on this, and attempted to summarise teachings into a philosophical position. Proof-texting is all well and good, but it only goes so far. The meaning, the framework, of the texts must be sought. Constantinople had assembled ideas since at least the C2 days of Justin [the] Martyr, that had been mulled over in the church.

Following this major resolution—though church politics created ripples that had to die down—other questions moved onto the agenda for resolution. For instance, given that Jesus was a historical given, had he simply thought and acted as deity as the Second and Unfallen Adam? How did deity and manhood keep company yet preserve the identity of both? Or in fact did Jesus have only his *deity*-soul/selfhood, and thus stood apart from the rest of humanity that only had a *human*-soul/selfhood? Some leaders emphasised the deity of Jesus; some the humanity of Jesus.

Apollinarius of Laodicea in Syria (c.310-90), loved both the Creed of Nicea and its good friend Athanasius. His problem was rather with the humanity of Jesus, than with his deity. The First Adam had, it seemed, passed on contamination of the human soul. So if Jesus was human—of Adam—would his soul not have been contaminated? It sounded to Apollinarius that to call Jesus' soul—his inner life—*human*, was to call it contaminated, and so was heretical.

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[132] Nicea 1 also dealt with when to celebrate Easter (Lunar or Solar calendar?), helped reconcile Melitians in Egypt (a schism built on the controversy of the lapsi), and advised on discipline (eg regarding the lapsi and rules for clergy).

Apollinarius loved preaching the incarnation as a virgin birth supplying a body, a tent, for perfect deity, and he loved the expression *Theotokos* (Mother of *God*, Bearer of *God*). He said that the eucharist was bread and wine filled with God the son's life, and that likewise the body of Jesus was human, filled with God the son's soul. Was it that Jesus' body was like a sponge, and that his soul/spirit was like water in but not of the sponge? He thought his picture good.

Some fiercely disagreed with Apollinarius. Identity with mankind must go beyond simply a walking talking living doll, moved by deity like a puppet. This is a bit like a question still asked now and again: *Could Jesus have given way to temptation?* Is it right to call someone who believes in the deity of Jesus, a heretic? The answer is Yes, *if* they deny his humanity. I would further protect the term, *deity*.

What if God's son noncarnate, had his deity-soul humanised in incarnation, rather than adding a human-soul? Two modes of one soul, so to speak, a source and a stream? Was the Second Adam born with an unfallen soul, yet capable of falling? Was not the First Adam created with an unfallen soul, yet capable of falling? Paul's Adamic Christology might suggest this, plus the synoptic account where in agony, Jesus prayed "not my wish, but your will be done" (Lk.22:42), contrasting to the First Adam's "not your will, but my wish be done".[133]

Luke highlighted that Adam 1 was in some imperfect sense, God's son (Lk.3:38), yet presented Jesus as the perfectly human and humanly perfect son (Lk.4:3). Thus the Second Adam—his eternal *soul* filtered down into true, unfallen, humanness—established the contrasting direction in which his people live (1 Cor.15:22). This picture rejects the *souls in conflict* idea which Apollinaris rejected, and the *nonhumanity* idea which Constantinople rejected. It highlights Second Adam humanness over First Adam humanness.

Within this framework—namely deity transposed as Second Adam via Mary—the mode-inclusive term *monothelism* works, neither denying his deity nor human aspect (deity humanised), and so is biblically orthodox. Within the framework of Chalcedon—namely deity joined to humanity via Mary—the two-nature term *dithelism*

[133] This translation is based on the range of *thelō* covering both *will* and *wish*.

works, neither denying his deity nor human aspect (deity plus humanity), and so is biblically orthodox, and assumes a truly human will subjugated under a truly deity will.

Chalcedon also considered the nature of the Holy Spirit. Was God's spirit an impersonal force, a creation of God, or a co-eternal person with the father and the son? [134] Against the teachings of Macedonius[135] and Sabellius,[136] it proclaimed the deity of the spirit and denounced Apollinarianism (a trichotomist view of Jesus' spirit being eternal, affirming him perfect *apropos* inner deity, but not *apropos* inner humanity).[137] Indeed it proclaimed biblically that the spirit was to be *worshipped and glorified with the father and the son*.

Pentecostals/Charismatics have without looking back to the Creeds, sometimes wondered whether worshipping the spirit might not be blasphemy, misunderstanding Jhn.16:13 (KJV). In reaction some have tended to almost promote the spirit *above* the father and son—theologically demented as Smail lamented. Sadly Constantinople claimed honour for the Constantinople *See,* as if it had become Second Rome in ecclesiastical hierarchicalism. It allowed the primacy to Rome, but demoted Alexandria in favour of itself on the basis of *Sees* ranked according to social status. Hierarchical heresy?

AD 431 / Ephesus / Nestorianism: Not enough deity?

Nestorius, who became bishop of Constantinople in 428, agreed with Cyril of Alexandria that heresy and paganism should be

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134 The Nicene Creed abbreviated N, endorsed at Nicea, is shorter than what is usually called the Nicene Creed abbreviated C, or called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. C may have been a development of N, recommended by Cyril to Constantinople's council without Constantinople actually endorsing it. Chalcedon held that Constantinople had endorsed it.

135 Macedonius possibly both denied the spirit's deity, and founded a group later condemned as fighters against the spirit, the Pneumatomachi, all of whom denied the spirit's deity and some of whom denied the son's deity.

136 Sabellius founded modalist monarchianism, an underlying current undermining Western Christianity.

137 Many christological heresies are failures of not affirming *both* true deity and true humanity, which Chalcedon's *hypostatic union* theory affirms.

overcome. But unlike Cyril he heeded Theodore of Mopsuestia's warning, that any concept like *God's mother*, could conceptually dehumanise Christ just like Apollinarianism, and conceptually deify Mary—that is, that that cluster of ideas tended towards heresy (see Tim Dowley's *Lion History of the Church*, 1996:179).

Cyril, as bishop of Alexandria, condemned Nestorius, as teaching that Jesus wasn't by essence God as a man, but was a man/boy *adopted* by God to be his son, and Nestorius was likened to Paul of Samosata. Perhaps because he disliked Nestorius, Cyril misread Nestorius' Antiochene christology,[138] for though Nestorius stressed Christ's humanity, he still believed in his deificity.

What Nestorius feared was that the popular term Θεοτοκος/ *Theotokos*, made Mary seem to be a member of deity (isn't one who bears God, God?). Nestorius insisted on the devotional amendment to Χριστοτοκος/*Christotokos* (bearer/mother of Christ). *Theotokos* could also misinterpret Christ's acts as acts of deity (*voilà* Apollinarianism), rather than interpret them as acts of humanity in co-operation with deity. Nestorianism was a corruption of Nestorius' teaching by his followers—don't damn the source by the stream!

Nestorius was respected by the Emperor Theodosius 2, and Cyril had to be careful how he built up his case against Nestorius. To influence Theodosius you needed to be on good terms with either his wife, Eudokia, or his sister, Pulcheria, since "like a weather-cock the emperor's church policy tended to vacillate according to whether he was being controlled by his wife or by his sister" (Chadwick 1994:196). But between Eudokia supporting Nestorius, and Pulcheria opposing him, life for Theodosius must have been a misery.

He didn't wish to get involved. For the public and many monastics, the idea was already set in that deceased saints mediated Christian prayers. Some now liked the idea of Mary as top of that pantheion. To believe in an exalted title, was to believe in an exalted advocacy

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138 Antiochene theology stressed the humanity of Jesus, while Alexandrian theology stressed his deity: the questions were whether both met in Jesus and in which case, in what way.

before the throne of God. Mary as God's mother, sounded better than Mary merely as messiah's mother. Don't rock the boat, Nesty.

But Nestorius rocked that boat, upset that applecart. Cyril was on a winner with Nestorius' disdain of the term Theotokos—how many Christians like their devotional patterns being challenged? Nestorius seemed, well, impious, and his comment that "God was never a baby two or three months old", seemed outright scandalous!

The Council of Ephesus, chaired by none other than Cyril, rejected Nestorius and the term *Christotokos*. But it had done so before Nestorius' supporters from Syria had arrived, and before Rome arrived. Syria rejected Cyril and the term *Theotokos*. Cyril, in something of a *quid pro quo*, was prepared to side with Rome's baby, Pelagianism, if they sided with his, Theotokos. Politicking went on.

When the emperor reluctantly intervened, he threw both sides into jail as heretics. Cyril bought his way out, but Nestorius lost heart, called it a day, and retired in deference to Cyril to the Kharga Oasis in Nubia. Later Cyril buckled under pressure from John of Antioch, a supporter of Nestorius, and accepted a more Nestorian position—for example, that biblically there is a difference between Christ having acted either as regards his deity, or as regards his humanity. Though for this compromise, John had to rubber stamp the condemnation of Nestorius, whose final years were somewhat sad.

To this day there is a conflict in the West, with what some call *Mariology* (doctrine about Mary) being condemned by some as *Mariolatry* (idolatry about Mary): undoubtedly by slipping down the ideogram of *Theotokos*, some go beyond *Mariology* into *Mariolatry*, even as 'Muhammad' had wrongly thought when he rightly condemned the unbiblical idea of Mary as one of three gods.

By and large the East upholds the Council of Ephesus, and liturgically curses the name *Nestorius*: one may hope that the curses do him no harm. Contentedly knowing that his ideas were basically those of Flavian and Leo, Cyril closed his memoirs with his dearest desire being "that God should be praised in heaven and on earth. As for Nestorius let him remain anathema". Perhaps he harked back to Paul's humility in the face of Corinthian party politics (see 1 Cor.1:13).

AD 451 / Chalcedon / Eutychianism: Not enough humanity?

The monk Eutyches had supported Cyril against Nestorius, and been disappointed by compromises by Cyril. The humble Flavian had become bishop of Constantinople, and upset Eutyches by upsetting his proud godson Chrysaphius, who having replaced Nestorius was gaining power in court to the unease of Theodosius' sister, Pulcheria. And Eutyches was unhappy both with Constantinople rising above Alexandria in power and influence, and Bishop Flavian siding more with the Christology of Antioch (focus on Christ's humanity) than the Christology of Alexandria (focus on Christ's deificity).

A coalition of 3 ultra-Cyrilline—Monophysite—leaders, led by Eutyches, began a heresy hunt. Chrysaphius was well placed to have Theodoret, bishop of Antioch, imperially gagged. Flavian, forced to judge Eutyches, condemned him for the heresy of Apollinarianism, since Eutyches insisted that after the union of God and man (so Chalcedon) there was only the deity nature in Christ, not the human.[139]

However, it appears that Flavian was being trapped into issuing a judgement on grounds that Eutyches could then nicely use both to appeal his innocence, and to see Flavian condemned (see Frend 228). Eutyches appealed to Leo 1 of Rome, who initially suspected that Flavian would be the problem. After all, bishops of Constantinople had a bad reputation of being too ambitious and needing to be cut down to size.

But when he considered Eutyches' belief that Christ was "one [non-human] nature after the union"—an expression taken from Cyril of Alexandria—he was horrified. Eutyches even had a problem about Christ's body being fully human! Leo issued a Tome—a report—against Eutyches, disciple of Cyril, and "Nestorius, reading the Tome in his lonely exile, felt that the truth had been vindicated at last, and that he could die in peace" (Chadwick 1994:202).

However Dioscorus, the violent bishop of Alexandria, and in the ultra-Cyrilline coalition, chaired a Council (Ephesus 449) that didn't

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[139] On the question, "After the Union was there one or two natures in Christ?" Eutyches said one, Flavian said two. We might say, deity humanised.

allow Leo's Tome to be considered, sided with Eutyches, and amid frenzied scenes deposed Flavian, who was brutally mistreated by Egyptian clerics and died days later.

A year later Emperor Theodosius had died and his sister Pulcheria exacted revenge against Chrysaphius for hounding Flavian to death. Leo was still angry with Dioscorus, and Dioscorus' protégé, whom Dioscorus had made bishop of Constantinople, was happy to side against Dioscorus and firm up both his position as Constantinople's bishop, and Constantinople's claim—against Alexandria—of being second only to Rome. Pulcheria also had Eutyches exiled, and instigated the Council of Chalcedon (451), which overturned the Second Council of Ephesus (449), and deposed Dioscorus.

Eutyches remained to some as an anti-Nestorian hero. But at Chalcedon "Eutyches, the implacable opponent of Nestorius in the [First] Council of Ephesus, was charged, to his great astonishment, with being himself a heretic, and with teaching that Christ had only one nature—the divine" (Renwick 56). However, neither was Nestorius officially let off the hook. Chalcedon didn't wish to issue a new Creed or undo an old. Lest Nicea be devalued, it issued instead a Definition, the idea of a supplement to and a qualifier of, Nicea.

The Chalcedon Definition 1# held that *theotokos* defended against a sharp divide between Christ's humanity and deity (*contra* Nestorius) and 2# insisted that there were incarnate two perfect natures in Christ, deity and humanity co-continuing without confusion, change, division, or separation (*contra* Eutyches), one προσωπον/ *prosōpon* (person), one ὑποστασις/*hypostasis* (entity, nature).

It rejected the idea of Rome's bishop being a *global/catholic bishop*. Chalcedon upheld the idea that the will of a council was greater than the will of any one bishop. Its "system of church government opposed to that of the papacy…has stood the test of time. From Chalcedon the way led to Constance, and thence to the Reformation, and perhaps…to the World Council of Churches" (Frend 232).

AD 553 / Constantinople 2 / Three birds with one stone

This may have been an exercise in ditching trouble for peace. Chalcedon didn't end church division. Later, Emperor Zeno issued a political compromise called the *Henoticon*, to impose doctrinal

agreement. It was too imperial for some, and social and theological reactions rippled throughout the empire, as church politicians sought the upper hand over church theologians.

Theologically some argued that Cyril was right and Chalcedon wrong; some said that both could be harmonised. A lot of argument was based on selective writings (anthologies) from the different theologians past, and few people—a monophysite, Severus of Antioch, being a notable exception—seemed scrupulously careful about fair representation. Yet even under his weather eye, a forgery claimed to have been written by Dionysius the Areopagite (Ac.17:34), still slipped in to support the monophysite cause![140]

There was also debate going on between Christians, as to whether Scripture gave literal scientific information about creation—what's new? Socially, Persian Christians tended to embrace Nestorianism to improve its relationship with Persia's government! *To please the emperor I'll welcome Chalcedon; to please his enemies I'll ditch Chalcedon!* Does truth not stand on its own two feet?

Chalcedon was too Antiochene to at first go down well in the Alexandrian East, where most sided with Cyril and Eutyches on the idea that the humanity of Jesus was rather like wine swallowed up, lost in an ocean of deity. These supporters became known as monophysites—that is, One-Nature believers—and they became a powerful sector in the church. They sidelined Nestorians into Persia.

All this led to a divided empire, and politically the Eastern emperor Justinian preferred a unified empire. Would dropping Chalcedon drop the West? Theodora his dominant wife, favoured monophysitism. Anyway, to pacify monophysites in the East,[141] in 543-4 he condemned three pro-Nestorian leaders (viz Theodore of

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140 This forgery is nowadays known as Pseudo-Dionysius but, not being clear cut about monophysitism, possibly wasn't written for that particular cause.

141 Followers of Cyril of Alexandria and Eutyches, both of whom had led to the idea that the deity of Christ had swamped out his humanity. Hence *monophysitism,* which means *one nature*. Perhaps the term could cover a balanced Christology.

Mopsuestia; Theodoret of Cyprus; Ibas of Edessa), writing a doctrinal statement ('Chapter') against each.

These three had escaped condemnation by Chalcedon, and he believed that monophysite unhappiness with them uncondemned, needed removing to help him eventually reunite the western and eastern parts of the church.

Constantinople 2 upheld Justinian, though the weak pope Vigilius unhappily realised that Justinian's attack theologically knocked both Chalcedon and Antiochene theology. Fortunately for Vigilius, he died before returning to Rome. Monophysites were still not reconciled, as they feared coming under even a moderated Chalcedonian Definition reworked by Leontius of Byzantium. They began forming an independent church network to disengage from Chalcedonian authority.

Origen's great name (c.185-254) appears in its list of heretics, though this may have been later smuggled into the records. The Council also denied that Mary bore other children: "she was ever virgin…she was mother to God and to him alone" (Chadwick 1995:89). Many scholars think that this went against clear biblical data, adversely impacting the church. But enough for now.

The obedient son

Throughout I have tried to make clear that the primary trinitarian task is a good huiology—doctrine of the noncarnate son—and thence a good Christology—doctrine of the incarnate son, Christ. It is only incarnate that God the son can be a human pattern for us humans. Overlooking this leads to problems such as Keith Getty and Stuart Townend's, *Jesus is Lord* (2003). Besides a few common wobblies,[142] does it not stray into Apollinarianism, in that the human

[142] For instance, "this living bread", should be "the living bread", especially since the phrase hadn't already been introduced in the song. And there's a danger of singers not mentally switching from Jesus the lord returning, to God the father taking his children—not children of Jesus—home. Jesus has siblings, but no children. It is very debateable, incidentally, as to whether Jesus the man *became* a curse: on Gal.3:13, compare the NLT to the NIV.

limitations of God's son as a man, are bypassed? Does any man sustain stars and planets? It is theologically inept. Nor did Jesus, being the human mode of God's son, lay aside his crown, though God's son noncarnate, did in becoming Jesus.[143]

"The doctrine of the trinity does not lay an irrelevant philosophical mystery on top of a simple scriptural gospel; it simply makes explicit what is implicitly in the biblical gospel, in order to defend it against precisely the philosophical attacks that are made upon it" (Smail 112).

Smail linked Jhn.14:28—"my father is greater than I"—to both God the son noncarnate, and God the son incarnate. In John's context, the disciples would have no idea that it meant more than the latter, since they did not believe in the former until after the resurrection. Since after that revelation he spoke of sharing one name with the father and the spirit (Mt.28:19), I think it safe to say that the meaning of Jhn.14:28 was limited to Jesus, even if it also reflects the intra-trinitarian relationship of an obedient son beyond creation.

Karl Barth marvelled at such an intra-trinitarian relationship, in which it is "as natural to be lowly as it is to be high" (Smail 114). C S Lewis spoke of an eternal deify dance, where one dance partner leads, and their dance partner follows.[144] An intra-trinitarian

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143 This aspect of the song would be corrected if stanza's one and two were amended from [Jesus is lord], to [God's son is lord].

144 "And that, by the way, is perhaps the most important difference between Christianity and all other religions: that in Christianity, God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance. The union between the father and the son is such a live concrete thing that this union itself is also a Person. I know this is almost inconceivable, but look at it thus. You know that among human beings, when they get together in a family, or a club, or a trade union, people talk about the 'spirit' of that family, or club, or trade union. They talk about its 'spirit' because the individual members, when they are together, do really develop particular ways of talking and behaving which they would not have if they were apart. It is as if a sort of communal personality came into existence. Of course, it is not a real

subordination need not imply a subordination of being, of substance, but would imply a subordination of person or persons.

To be on the safer side, we may speak of a subordination of function (functional subordinationism), not of being (ontological subordinationism)—as obedience of deity (not divinity) under deity, not just obedience under deity. I am a little uneasy about using Mt.11:29 to express subordinationism, for if gentle and humble (NIV) show that, are we saying that the father is not gentle and humble?

That said, I accept that we see subordination both by God the son noncarnate, coming into humanity (incarnation), and through Jesus' mortal life and obedience unto death. And under authority, Jesus had authority granted to him from the father (Mt.8:9; Lk.7:8). There is a gentleness, a humbleness par excellence, in the father giving us his son, and thence the spirit of adoption, and such characteristics allow glorious subordination.

There is also a biblical theme of voluntary slavery recommended for all Christians, both to the lord of the church, Christ, and also to one another (αλληους/*allēous*). It connects to the idea that we have been bought by God, and so *are not our own*. In the West this latter idea is often scoffed at, as it was in ancient Rome. How many subverted women protest that their unborn babies are *their bodies*, rather than being bodies within bodies, innocent guests?[145] How many men, usually partners not spouses, encourage their chant, as if a baby unborn is merely an inconvenient and disposable subhuman blob of matter—as Nazis discounted ethnic Jews? Discounting God, we fall into survival of the fittest, deeming others as meaningless, and think

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person: it is only rather like a person. But that is just one of the differences between God and us. What grows out of the joint life of the father and son is a real Person, is in fact the Third of the three Persons who are God." (Lewis 2002:4.4.175) In *Christian Reflections: The Poison of Subjectivism*, Lewis also said that "Christian theology does not believe God to be a person" (1981:106). Yes, but be aware that the term *God* can double for the father as the father.

[145] I take a term from Sue Ellen Browder's, *Subverted*, which tracks her promoting the sexual revolution, and subsequently repudiating it.

death to be the end of absurdity. If you can get away with it in this life, abusing others is deemed irrelevant: *It was good while it lasted*?

John Calvin struggled with deific subordinationism. His Christology suggested a human-only part of Jesus, and a deity-only part—and never the twain shall meet. "Human and [deific] natures tended to operate rather like the man and woman in the old fashioned weatherhouse, in uneasy succession, so that when one is on display—sunshine, woman; rain, man—the other is withdrawn. When Calvin spoke in this vein, one begins to wonder whether [deific] and human natures with such opposing characteristics, can credibly belong to the same person, without tearing them apart, and [Calvin's] explanations are not very reassuring" (Smail 118). If obedience is alien to deity, was the cross merely *human* obedience? Does it not reveal the deificity of God's obedient son? Are we not reconciled to deity by God the son as man?

Making a similar point to C S Lewis, Smail advised incorporating both philosophical and biblical insights. If we see "God not as the one decked out with a bundle of absolute attributes all beginning with omni-, but as love that has unconditional freedom to give itself and to be itself in the giving, there is no intrinsic impossibility about seeing how the same free love can express itself in father and son in two different ways" (Smail 119). Does our subservience not reflect our imago dei, our imago christi, nature?

The biblical term, sonship, expresses both noncarnate and incarnate aspects of God the son, and carries the idea of generation—howbeit eternal generation—and filial obedience. If somehow our obedience is not in deity's likeness, then in what likeness is it? In thinking of God the son noncarnate, must we ditch all Jesus' *human* characteristics, as John Calvin would have had us do?

Was not being sent into the world (God the son's incarnation), an act of noncarnate obedience? Moreover, this thought can suggest why it was the son—instead of the father or the spirit—who entered into a human mode. God's son, the fount of obedience, even as God the father is the fount of giving? "The obedience of the son is the means of the father's grace and of the church's gratitude" (Smail 121). The obedience of the son who came to seek and save the lost, above all to please his father, should also spur us on to good works.

Chapter 8

See the Trinity and the Cross

The trinity and the atonement

Jürgen Moltmann wrote an ill-named book, *The Crucified God*. No Jürgen, God was not crucified, nor is he any kind of god. Nor was God the noncarnate son, crucified. God the son incarnate, the man christ Jesus, was crucified. Still, we should not totally judge a book by its title. Some cry out that the Christian message is pagan, a myth of a wrathful father-god, who sought to slay rebellious mankind, but whose kindly son took the only possible option to save mankind, namely becoming man and taking the death we deserve—a bit like kindly Prometheus, giver of fire. Moltmann has been one of many offering a corrective to this, namely that the father suffered too.

If insuperable poison has penetrated into man's very nature, might it not be that deity itself has, by adopting a mortal human mode, become the antidote, the only possible option to save mankind, even as Moses lifted up the bronze snake for the healing of those who had been poisoned by snakes (Jhn.3:14—hupsos doctrine)? As C S Lewis reminded us, atonement theories—or *pictures*—are themselves only ways to help us to see why the crucifixion was essential for our eternal benefit—we see but in part. We should not dismiss simply because we do not understand. I cannot understand atoms.

With Moltmann, we can see that it was not simply one man on that cross. I am drawn to the idea of deity being an artist, who created his artistry, his unfolding living canvass, his universe, and though beyond it—transcendent as deists rightly maintain—is also within it, immanent as most theists rightly maintain.[146] Only within it, I

[146] C S Lewis made the point that "if we used that as our only clue, then I think

suspect, can noncarnate deity experience the limitation of time and pain. Thus, at the level of beyondness, deity is impassible, but at the level of creation, deity is passible—that is, able to feel cosmic pain.

Thus by the cross, the father as-immanent suffered, though not on the cross. I have heard all too many painful prayers where exuberant people praying to the father, smuggle in the idea that he was crucified for us. That is a point which I make in my *Prayer's Gone Global*, especially where those who pray like that haven't a deep-seated devotional relationship with the father as the father, the son as the son, and the spirit as the spirit.

They might pass with flying colours, any test on the doctrine of the trinity. It is like paint which is merely laid on their surface, and not like a dye or stain which has soaked right through. They need to soak it into their very blood, their spiritual genetics. And if they use the term *lord* for the father, and *also* for the son, and as they pray fail to visualise to whom they pray, it's actually quite easy to begin prayer to the *father*, thanking him *as lord* for *sending* his son *as lord*, thanking *the lord* for *dying* on the cross, and asking *the lord* to bless us in *his*—the father's/son's?—name.[147] Lordship gets kinda jumbled up. And some make it clear that they ask for Jesus' sake, not their

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we should have to conclude that he was a great artist (for the universe is a very beautiful place), but also that he is quite merciless and no friend to man (for the universe is a very dangerous and terrifying place)" (2002:1.5.29).

Since then, the anthropic principle has become so accepted that some atheists postulate that universes beyond count (multiverse) must exist simply to scratch their itch for randomness, so that ours can be written off as probably the only one which randomly is bio-friendly, a local bylaw.

The multiverse idea is unscientific, a mere philosophical expedient to squeeze stubborn facts into a shaky theory. Prof. Anthony Flew, a former longterm champion of atheism, noted that that postulation merely adds to their dilemma. For if the universal laws of nature are simply bylaws, we then must explain a super-law connecting all the so-called universes' bylaws. "Multi-verse or not, we still have to come to terms with the origin of the laws of nature. And the only viable explanation here is the divine Mind" (Flew 121).

147 Christian petitionary/request prayer, should basically only be to the father, and in his son's name/authority/mission/family.

own, missing the points that *Jesus* has no needs, that *they* do, and that their father loves to meet *their* needs.

Paul kept a pretty tight distinction between God as father, and Jesus as lord. Paul's rule of thumb is that the father is God, Jesus is lord, and we ask God, not the lord! Now not all the canonical writers sang from Paul's hymn sheet, but it's the hymn sheet I'd recommend to the Sabellian West, where, as I've said above, we can have Hillsong fabricate the claim, "You alone are God, Jesus!", and besides getting away with it, getting well paid for their dollop of Sabellianism, where it seems that God is one person (as Islam maintains), expressed perhaps in three ways (as Islam denies), as an actor switching masks as they perform. I have not asked *the lord* for anything for over five decades.

Moltmann held that the cross actually ends monotheism. I disagree. Tell me that the cross, that the incarnation for that matter, redefined monotheism, and I will gladly listen to you. For nowadays we should be speaking of tripersonal monotheism, not the monopersonal monotheism of Sinai or even of Mecca, theologically a little tighter.

I suspect that rightly he wished to get the full trinity into our daily framework, and felt that mono—oneness—did not do the trick. But I agree with Smail that although Moltmann can be faulted for an enthusiasm carrying into overreach, nevertheless he offered a good cross-shaped focus on our doctrine of God. Should it not be a living doctrine of sharing in deity's life and pain within the universal canvass, and deity in sharing in our pain and life? Do we not find the heart of the father in the heart of the atonement?

Obedience and atonement

The reason for and success of atonement—the allowing of at-one-ment with deity—is man's disobedience and messiah's obedience. It is certainly true that God the son showed obedience by creating a human mode for himself to die for us. Indeed, he showed his love for us by happily running to die, so to speak, eagerly volunteering to do so to please his father and to help us.

Some suggest that his death was not simply an act of obedience, but successful atonement because it was the ultimate offering of obedience on our behalf, that we, so to speak, offer ourselves in him and are thus accepted as within ultimate obedience.

Inexclusivism holds that salvation-into-the-church is exclusively for all those who welcome God's son, and that salvation-into-heaven is inclusive to all who have a core desire for God, even if they have never welcomed his son as his son. By inexclusivism I can see why Naomi didn't see Sinai as an only-entrance to heaven, and why Peter didn't see Christianity as an only-entrance to heaven. Naomi tried to dissuade Gentile Ruth from entering; Peter consciously withheld evangelism from Gentiles until Ac.10.

All said, inclusion into the Christian family is highly meaningful, even if it is not required for ultimate life and is costly. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, God's grace is far from cheap. In fact we don't buy grace, grace buys us, and in giving valueless people value, paid a priceless price (1 Cor.6:19-20).[148] We come in by, and gain from, the stream of perfect obedience flowing globally through the cross. It does not guarantee to family members perfect obedience, but it does guarantee being in its flow, being in Christ (Rm.8:1). And it does demand that we live our lives as children obedient in love to their father. How we properly subjugate lesser obediences—such as to kith, kin, bosses, and nation—is another subject. First things first.

The Bible is clear that humanity falls below perfect obedience to God by default. It is often pictured as the Fall of Man. Some hold to the idea of biological evolution from the simplest cell, to mankind—whether Random Evolutionism (at best deism), Intelligent Evolutionism (at best Christian), or somewhere in-between. Whatever the mechanism behind man's existence, the Bible teaches that man is intrinsically unable to spiritually evolve into perfect obedience, into obedience to deity, without deity's help. Hence there is deity's

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148 His focus was more on avoiding fake-trust in Christ and attaining true-trust in Christ. The former yields fake-salvation; the latter yields true-salvation. True-trust is personally costly commitment to Christ who gives freely what we can't buy, earn, or deserve. And for Christians, progressive salvation—maturation, abundance, Christification—comes through ongoing obedience to Christ's lordship. Do you think that examples of fake-salvation could include Johann Eck's *Purgatory Box*, and Billy Graham's *Hands Up* decisionism? The latter I highly honour, for altruistically Graham counselled real depth.

intervention, what C S Lewis said some might call the next significant step of evolution/change—Intelligent Design?

We may picture our imperfect obedience, our No to God, as leading to his No to us. In *The Last Battle* (C S Lewis), we read analogously that certain dwarves, having been undeceived about a false Aslan, were unprepared to be *taken in* by the real Aslan, and so the real Aslan could not help them because they would not permit him to, and because he was not permitted by his nature to force his help on any. God cannot say Yes to those who say No to him, so long as they are saying No to him. But bear in mind, that while there can be immediate benefits to saying Yes to the gospel, there can be a hidden Yes which will only be revealed at the resurrection to come. In the story above, Emeth had said No to Aslan in this life, yet his hidden Yes was only revealed beyond this life.

Rm.1, talking in general terms about man's waywardness—including talk about homosexual lifestyle—directly speaks in terms of God *abandoning* sinners rather than *punishing* them.[149] Could that be because of their No to his fatherhood? "If you are not punished, as all his children are, it means you are not his real children, but bastards" (GNB: Heb.12:9). If truly spiritually abandoned by abandoning true spirituality, society collapses in on itself.

C S Lewis noted how by abandoning objectivity, man swallows the poison of subjectivism. Atheism cannot even absolutely prove murder to be less moral than healing, since it cannot absolutely defend morality to be absolute, to be something above us to be discerned. Much talk on consensuality; not much defence of consensuality. Much talk of informed choice; not much permitted

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149 The Christian position remains as hating the enemy of mankind, sin and its effects, and loving sinners by truth and help. "We are—all of us—disordered. We do not like to think of ourselves as disordered, and this too is a reflection of the fall" (Yarhouse 40-1). On homosexualism, a book that informed me was *Eros Defiled*, written by John White as a Christian, a psychiatrist, and an ex-homosexual with a big heart for those who were homosexuals but wished to come out of it—a goal less and less permitted by a proud society *contra* conversion and therapy.

access to full information. If there is no moral law from above, logically there is only tooth and claw law from below, and no logic.

Apropos Rm.1 we may speak of abandonment to sinful desires; to shameful lusts; to depraved minds—the societal endgame of stubborn disobedience to him. But more hopefully, the same word for abandonment, παρεδοκεν/*paredoken*, was also applied to the father abandoning his perfectly obedient son to identify with, and to benefit, us (Rm.8:32). Should we not abandon ourselves to him?

At the cross, it was as if the condemnation which guilty man fully deserved, was fully borne by the totally innocent man. This shows something of the grand exchange and is a simple picture speaking of wonders. Of course, any illustration can be stretched to death. Some may retort that for a just judge, having rightly condemned a homicidal maniac to prison or execution, to then step from bench to dock to take their sentence, is all very big hearted and technically might satisfy blind justice by punishing the crime though not the criminal. But isn't it a rum do for the public to have the maniac rampaging back on the streets wreaking mayhem?

That's when another salvation image begs to speak. For what if in that exchange, the sanity of the judge—some would say the judge's son—is given to the maniac? If in short the woman was no longer a threat to society, but was recoded to good—what some would call a new creation, born anew, rewired—was made a judge by stepping into the bench? *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (C S Lewis), depicts something of such a wonder, when the faultless Aslan takes the place of the faulty Edmund, and by his sacrifice—voluntary innocent for voluntary guilty—death itself gives up its new prisoner and begins to die. And having met Aslan Edmund, wonderfully transformed yet imperfect, overcomes the witch. In Christ we're of the new creation which has dawned upon our world (2 Cor.5:17)—if you wish, call that a parallel universe, or the new exodus.

2 Cor.5:17 speaks of wonder, "the change in the soul which revolutionises the world.... We feel, as it were, one throb of that glad surprise with which Paul had looked out on the world after God had reconciled him to himself by his son. The past was dead to him, as dead as Christ on his cross; all its ideas, all its hopes, all its ambitions, were

dead; in Christ he was another man in another universe" (Denney 206). Yes, but ethical connections and obligations might remain, James.

Atonement from/by/to deity

"But all {these} things are from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself [received us into favour, brought us into harmony with himself] and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [that by word and deed we might aim to bring others into harmony with him]" (AMPC: 2 Cor.5:18: adjusted).

From deity

The act of atonement came from deity as regards initiation, as regards plan, and Paul attributed the initiative to God, not to God's son—the father first (2 Cor.5:18). The cross was an outcome, not the initiative. And the from-ness was in love. Some picture a kindly Jesus suffering by getting in the way of an angry father to take our punishment. Such a picture underplays the father's love for us. Some say that Jesus spoke to his father on our behalf and cajoled him into begrudging forgiveness.

The truth is more complex, and more glorious. After all, the cross was submission, and Jesus went to the cross to perform *his father's will*. God so loved the world that he *sent* his son. We must never think of God in tri-theistic terms, with the son begging his bad-tempered father into forgiving sinners. The triune one is united in his purposes and designs, and both stands over against us in wrath (we are all by nature children of wrath) and also stands over us in love.

The plan of redemption is as much the father's design as the son's. In other words, the image of Christ's intercession must not be teased out to suggest that he is talking the father into doing something the father doesn't want to do, or that he has to remind the father of the significance of the cross because otherwise the father might easily forget. The entire intercessory ministry of the exalted Christ is by the design of God the triune one,[150] and its purpose is to lay out, in

[150] Not by the way a triune god, as if other kinds of god—and goddesses?—exist. If we worship the trinity, we avoid worshipping a triune god of fantasy.

the boldest terms, how the safe status of Christ's blood-bought people, of all those whom the father has given to the son, depends, now and forever, on Jesus' once-for-all atoning sacrifice, on the utter satisfaction it provides. The biblical picture is the father's love.

Some leave us "with a cringing guilt-ridden religion which has to hide behind the love of Jesus in order to be saved from the only barely contained wrath of an angry god" (Smail 129). But No, "God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful" (CEV: Rm.5:8). And with the incarnation in mind, John commented that "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his one of a kind son, so that everyone who trusts in him will not be lost but will have eternal life" (Jhn.3:16).

The balance is that God in love gave what was required. And several overlapping ideas give a better understanding of what was required, and why it was that the cross was, if not the only way to make the way, at least the minimum way to make the way for us. God so loved that he gave his beloved son, and his beloved son opened access to a greater depth to that love than had previously been possible.

By deity

Yet the atonement—which harmonised us to God (καταλλασσω/ *katallassō*)—was by deity—the lord, God's son—who for our sake became a man.[151] We could not make ourselves at one with God, but God could, and it shows his underserved favour (1 Jhn.4:10). Jesus' death, if he were merely human, does not make any kind of sense. But if he were human and deific, the Second Adam, it can make a sort of sense beyond fathoming. In giving his son the father in a sense gave himself for us—representation at the deepest level; the deepest cost; the needful cost.

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[151] Incidentally, this section was of Paul underlining that he and his team's core mission was to the unconverted, establishing new churches, the mission of harmonising human beings to God (18-9). But Paul and his team were held up by trying to sort out the disharmony within the Corinthian church. Within the global picture, he, reflecting Christ who had been the restoration-offering (21), begged them to be in local church harmony (20: *katallassō*), in line with previous illustrations of bodily parts being healthier when not disunited.

We can see Jesus, God's son made lower than the angels by joining humanity so that by God's grace he could taste death for everyone (Heb.2:9). As said, we could not raise ourselves to God's height, and spiritually were as dead in relation to God (Eph.2:1). But the root meaning of death is being *cut off*. It does not in itself mean to be oblivious, without sensation. The day Adam died was the day he sinned, yet he lived in knowledge of Yahweh God.

As regards aionic[152] life now, that requires becoming a Christian, which in turn is not merely intellectual believing. No, above that is spiritual believing, welcoming God the father through God the son, by God the spirit. As regards aionic life beyond mortal death, that requires a core orientation towards God: he alone sees our core, which the return of messiah will reveal.

But our innate deadness cannot produce life with God: that is his relationship to give, and ours to receive. And key here is χαρις/ *charis*, often translated as *grace*, and meaning undeserved giving. It has, of course, a wider range of meaning than Christian connection to God. For instance, Paul used it to underline that our voluntary monetary giving should be grace-giving to others (2 Cor.8:7). But for us perhaps the emphasis is rightly on being Christian. Peter reminded us that daily among Christian couples, each Christian husband should factor in that their Christian wife is a coheir in the grace of Christian life (1 Pet.3:7).[153]

To deity

It is interesting to compare Rm.5, where Paul switched his justified/ righteous metaphor (δικαιω/*dikaiō*: 1-9), to one of harmony (καταλλασσω/ *katallassō*: 10-1). Justification, righteousness, brings peace with God (Rm.5:1). The judge who has justly discharged you from direct penalty (exile), now invites you home for a meal as one of the family, and obliges you to live as one. We are called unto God.

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[152] From the Greek αιωνιος/*aiōnios*, translated either as *eternal* or *everlasting*.

[153] And implicitly vice versa. Wider, we are all heirs of common life, and should factor that into our relationships with our fellow human beings.

Yes, atonement is not put as being to Jesus (the narrower), or even to God's son (the wider), but to God the father. The father has reconciled us *by* his son *to* himself (2 Cor.5:18). Atonement has a father-focus.

As a hymn says, "Oh come to the father through Jesus the son, and give [God] the glory great things he has done." Atonement brings folk through the son to the father now. Indeed that is a prime reason why that, to the extent that Christians don't have a conscious and meaningful fellowship with the father, Christ has failed. Think about it. Jesus was and is the way to the father (Jhn.14:6)—not to himself! That is why we can lament petitionary prayers made to the lord—Jesus has failed. "Our father, your kingdom come, your will be done." At risk of being simplistic, the spirit points us upline to Jesus; Jesus points us upline to the father; the father points us downline to humanity. Keep looking up until you see him and share his vision.

The triumphant death of Jesus created the death to cut us off from our cutoff-ness from God, to open our blind eyes. And through Christ's death we can live not towards/unto ourselves, but towards God, our true source of life (2 Cor.5:14-5). There is also a very powerful reminder in Paul, that when all is over and done, Christ's kingdom will be obediently handed over to God his father (1 Cor.15:28).

The father's sacrifice

I have already touched on the folly of prayer-telling the father that he died for us. Yet Moltmann was right to highlight that the father too knew the pain of the cross, not in the son giving himself up, but in himself giving up his son to death. Tradition has long kept this truth at bay, by its "doctrine of God's impassibility, incapacity, and inability, to suffer, which has often made the father seem remote and distant from the work of atonement" (Smail 135)—we might even say that it suggests that he experienced a short burst of deism.

In a former Nazarene church, a theologically uneducated man now gone to glory, often with great gusto explicitly thanked the father, Jesus, for dying for him. It was not my place to say him nay, and the pastorate probably didn't. The father feels love and loss, but the modalistic basis of patripassianism, namely that *father*, *son*, and *spirit*, are three interchangeable names for the same person—a subsection of monopersonal monotheism—is muddleheaded.

Keep the gold, chuck the ore; eat the apple, toss the core. Smail argued that patripassianism carries rich gold, independent of the dross of modalism. Granting rich gold to be had, the motherload's name, *patripassianism*, does seem to be of doubtful reputation, by way of the longstanding affair with modalism, and "most Western Christians are practically modalists" (Letham 212). What's in a name?

Within my Evangelical circles I hear much of a certain Aunt Polly, silly sister to Mono Theism—and Mono Theism has some very mixed children and grandchildren! So should we ditch the term, monotheism, accordingly? No, because monotheism comes from what has long been recognised as a wide stable, and the problems have been known to be within the subdivisions of monotheism, the children and grandchildren. Patripassianism is in a class of its own, and I think it a little late in the day to separate it into modalistic and trinitarian children, into an Esau and Jacob. The father didn't die!

Oh, how infected our prayers can be. Here's two from two Evangelical church leaders, both true to form: "Our father in heaven, we thank you that this church is part of your flock, and we thank you that you purchased your flock by your death on the cross by your precious blood shed.... And so lord we just want to thank you. Lord help us to be full of worship, full of thankfulness, to what you've done for us by your death on the cross. In Jesus' name we pray."[154] And another one from the same circle: "Our heavenly father, we thank you this day, the lord's day, your day. We thank you for that very first Sunday when you rose triumphant from the grave... Lord speak to our hearts this morning. We ask this in the name of Jesus." Few blinked.

Moltmann rightly rejected patripassianism: "We cannot therefore say here in patripassian terms that the father also suffered and died. The

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154 I fault the prayer's head, not their heart, in calling the father the son. I deem this endemic even in networks exalting biblical doctrine. Incidentally, Ac.20:28 is about the blood (that is, the death) of the father's own son: the father has no blood nor did he die. It "fits in with the use of the phrase, his own son (Rm.8:32)" (Marshall 1992:334). That is, it could mean "the blood of his own/his own's blood", meaning, as in Lk.22:20, his own *son's* blood, not *his* own blood. These versions indicate this: GNB/LEB/NABREn/NCV/NIVn/NJB/NLTn/NRSV/NWT/TVB.

suffering and dying of the son, forsaken by the father, is a different kind of suffering from the suffering of the father in the death of the son. Nor can the death of Jesus be understood in theopaschite terms as the 'death of God'" (Moltmann 243). If the son felt the nails the hammer delivered; the father felt the hammer which delivered the blows.

But I reject Moltmann's polytheism—there are not god-types, such as a *crucified* god—and I insist that [Jesus is God; Jesus was crucified; therefore God was crucified], is a false syllogism. Jesus was/is not God *per se*, but the permanent temporal mode of the uncreated eternal second person of deity.

- It was not God crucified [as God];
- It was not God the son crucified [as God the son];
- It was God the son as a human being, Jesus, who was crucified.

I neither doubt that the stream connects to the source which on the canvass of creation, can feel the pain, nor that the father, the eternal generator of that source, can feel within creation the pain. But does changeable temporal pain upload *beyond* the canvass of creation into the timelessness beyond, into the Being beyond becoming?

I flinch if, being present, your finger is burnt. I do not flinch if not present. In their working life but not home life, might a doctor feel the pain of their patients? Deity is beyond creation (deism) and present within creation (theism). Is deity's commitment, shown by the incarnation, also shown in a permanent oneness with the canvass we call creation, and being present within it, is its pain felt?

In his depotentiated mode, God's son suffered much before the cross as a human within humanity (Heb.5:8; Mk.3:21; Gethsemane). Did the father feel no pain in his son's pain? Did the spirit not share in such pain? And if the father is mindful and feeling of even two-a-penny sparrows falling, is he unmindful and unfeeling of general birth-pain within creation (Rm.8:22)? Levin and Kitty felt her birth pains in different ways (Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*). Is there voluntary pain for the sender, for the sent son, and also for the sent spirit?

Hard data are hidden and scarce, but suggestive. For instance, reminding us that God is for us, not against us (unlike many!), Rm.8:32 opens the window just a little to God's grief in having, for our sake, to abandon his son. As a father, he even let his own son suffer for us

(ERV). The image would remind OT readers of Abraham's pain in leading even his one-of-a-kind son, to slaughter.[155] In Abraham's case, Yahweh stepped in, commending the obedience and trust of that father, who had intended to go through with what his *god* had commanded—as many did in those days—and hadn't expected intervention. It had been a test and a prophecy of what Yahweh would himself one day do at a deeper level and for humanity's sake.

Is another clue written into *The Prodigal Son and the Watching Father*? It is far from obvious that we should look among either errant son for the theme of God the son, let alone look for themes of sacrifice and atonement. Yet Smail suggested a reading between the lines, a christ in the shadows of the younger son's misery, and thus of our father hidden behind the doting father who imposes only an obligation-free welcome of his repentant, heirless son.[156] I am unconvinced, but am happy to postulate a spirit in the shadows, stirring up the prodigal to good sense, yielding a story of great grace: and if at the human level, how much more at the deific?

Smail did somewhat redeem himself from this little tangent, by citing P T Forsyth's point that we enter Christianity not on the condition of understanding its creation, but by "answering the grace and freedom of it with a like free, humble, and joyful, heart. It is taking the freedom of it home and not the cost" (Forsyth 17-8). Smail added that "many of us have known a sin-soaked guilt-ridden evangelicalism where there has been a great deal of talk about the cost of our

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155 Incidentally the term *monogenēs* can have an emphasis on some specialness out of the ordinary: Isaac was not Abraham's only son at that time—let's not forget Ishmael (ISV: Heb.11:17). Likewise, Jerome's mistranslation put into English as *only-begotten*, isn't what John meant about God's son (3:16 et al).

156 In pulling this idea from Helmut Thielicke, Smail (138) treated us to new words spoken by Jesus! "And what do you see when you see me?" asks Jesus, who then per Thielicke answers his own question. Jesus sometimes answered his own questions in canonical history (Mt.11:7-10), but was he interviewed for Thielicke's book? It's hazardous to put words into Christ's mouth, so to speak, a violation I call voxdeism. It is in fact one of the prophetical errors within charismaticism which Smail should have opposed. The Gnostics 'added' plenty of words! Let's stick to his canonical words.

atonement in the blood of Christ, and very little upon the free and loving grace of the father who in his intense desire for the homecoming of sinners, gave his son" (138).

Remember, this does not mean that all aspects of that story reflect our heavenly father. Nor does it mean that before conversion, each of us had actually lived with God as our father, then did a prodigal. Individually we're not little prodigals returning home; we have gotten a completely new home—homegranting, not homecoming—and are to get an even better one. Conversion is not restoration to a prior relationship; we were not prodigals. In short, let us not base too much of our thinking on the father and sons in *The Prodigal Son*, but nevertheless factor it in to plain biblical teaching.

It is certainly true that besides many Christians feeling just like the prodigal did, they rewrite the script to feature a wrathful father, and a peace-making big brother, and a more moderate outcome. *Not a place in the mansion, just a lean-to behind the cowshed suits me fine, and that's more grace than I deserved or expected. I deserved a life-sentence; probation for life is the most a miserable sinner like me could expect of grace. In name I'm family; in spirit I'm paying off my debt, or at least slogging it to show I'm grateful to my brother—it's my duty.* "In such a context, atonement has the smell of law fulfilled, rather than of grace poured out" (Smail 139)—cringing passivity?

Such does not faithfully represent even the father of the prodigal, let alone our loving heavenly father who, as we could say in storyform, sent his son into our pigsty to offer us "the grace of adoption" (Tyrrell 111) and to take the adopted to his mansion on high, to live as full and free members of his family και εσμεν/*kai esmen*—and that is what we are (1 Jhn.3:1). We are to see our redemptive father's love for each and every one of us, and to celebrate our spiritual identity. Let's not skulk in the back pew or in the scullery, but enjoy full unlimited access to the family room, with full confidence in our inheritance now and to come.

The Prodigal used various significant elements, applicable also in our story. If Christians, we have a robe which represents familiality, a ring which is the insignia of authority, sandals which distinguish the freeborn from the slaves, and the father's open arms of welcome, arms that sandwich a suffering heart.

Chapter 9

Our Father's Inheritors

Deathless and derivative inheritance

Pictured in many ways, we have spiritual enrichment. On the face of it, one of the most ridiculous images in the Bible—which elsewhere likens God to a mother hen—pictures us as heirs of the father. For put simply, a father's heirs don't inherit until he dies, and God the father doesn't die. But that said, to be an heir is to have a high family status, in which the heir can both enjoy life within their status, and draw from the possessions of their father, living under the roof which will be theirs—if the owner dies.

Jesus would return to God his unique father. For others this closeness is based on welcome-belief in his son (Jhn.20:17). On resurrection morn, Jesus through Mary Magdalene explicated this Christian level of God as father (Lk.10:22). The implication is that in the hitherto special way in which God was father to Jesus his one-of-a-kind son, so by the atonement he had been opened up to the disciples as also God and father at the same messianic level—with difference within that Level. The Greek phrasing shows this difference by a *To-you God and father*, and a *To-me God and father*, not lost in some mutual *To-us God and father*. Differently equal.

Now that relationship was obviously contingent on their belief that day that Jesus himself was indeed the son, risen from death. *John* had begun on a note that on the previous side of the cross, any who had welcomed God's son as Jesus, had had an entrance ticket—though the family door would only be unlocked by and after the cross (Jhn.1:12). They hadn't been messianic children of God, but had been on track to *become* such, once they went through that family door. On that basis of welcome, this side of the cross we truly become Jesus' brothers/sisters (αδελφοι/*adelphoi*) by the operation of God the spirit, the moment we walk through that door. A lower picture is of family adoption; the higher picture is of family birth.

As family, we are pictured as heirs of the father, and joint heirs on the same messianic level as Jesus (Rm.8:17). That has implications of being equally loved by our mutual father—on the messianic level—as Jesus is loved. Smail noted how the old KJV didn't always do the Greek text justice.[157] But here John was consistent, and his consistent method of putting our familiality, was the term τεκνον/*teknon* (child), and he contrasted that of Jesus as being ὑιον/*huion* (son/child). This, incidentally, doesn't help the case of some that the NIV underplayed a gender connective between *sons* and heirship. Would any dare suggest that the apostle John had underplayed such a connection?[158] By using tekna to speak of heirs, had Jesus, Luke, and Stephen (Lk.15:31; 1:7; Ac.7:5), underplayed such a connection?

The biblical writers could use different routes to achieve the same outcomes. Should we call Christians *children of God* (John), or *sons/daughters of God* (Paul)? John kept the term *son* (υἱος/*huios*) exclusively for Jesus. Paul used it also for us, but for us only as a plural,[159] generally linked to adoption, and in Greek best meaning sons/daughters.[160] Paul was gender clearest in 2 Cor.6:18.

Following the general patterns, if I speak as John spoke, I'd say that I am *a child* of God, and that Jesus is *the son* of God. If I speak like

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157 Eg Jhn.1:12 and 1 Jhn.3:1 read *sons*, following the Latin. Of the C16-7 batch of English versions, only Coverdale got it right.

158 In some cultures, only boys/men could inherit. It could make sense in such cultures, to use a term specifically to highlight inheritance, although one might wonder whether such a term was chosen so specifically.

159 Eg Rm.8:14 (*huioi*—sons/children); Incidentally Rm.8:17 has the more neutral term for children, τεκνα/*tekna*, yet happily draws out heirship from it. Υἱοθεσία/*Huiothesia* (8:15)—adopted sons/adopted children. Probably Paul occasionally dropped an emphasis to Roman audiences in Roman terms. But do we need to speak Rome's way when we don't have Rome's mindset? The NET, arguing that while filial-specific it is not gender-specific—though mistaken (so Carson) regarding heirship being only to sons in the ancient world—nicely reads "adoption as his legal heirs".

160 *Hebrews* dropped Paul's link to adoption, the *thesia* bit—(2:10; 12:8): in some contexts, *huioi* is inclusive, sons and daughters.

Paul spoke, I'd say that I am *a son* of God [by adoption],[161] my wife would say that she is *a daughter* of God [by adoption], and we'd both say that Jesus is *the son* of God. Either way, Jesus and I are both in God's family, though he through incarnation, and I through spiritual adoption/birth. The big thing is to keep in mind two facts here: 1# messianically we are equal family with Jesus; 2# messianically we lack his inner link of deific sonship—we are differently equal.

"God did not keep back his own son, but he gave him for us…" (CEV: Rm.8:32). In the paragraph immediately above, did I say that my wife is *not* a son of God, denying her inheritance? My point is that it does *not* deny her her inheritance rights, though if you are an ancient Roman—which you are not—you might think otherwise. Nor is her husband, God's son/child. Some Christians talk and sing confusion.

Smail's references to Jhn.1:18 suffered from earlier attempts—1846 (Etheridge) is the earliest I have traced—to best express the best text, initially trying to keep the traditional term *begotten*, while bringing out the deity link: both together simply sink the ship. God's son was/is not a [begotten god] (*contra* Smail 57-8; 143). Indeed he is no kind of god! "We do not believe in a god—for this would imply a possible or conceivable multiplication of gods—but only in God" (Tyrrell 76—slightly altered). In John's text, [begotten] is impermissible; [son] is permissible; [deity] is required. "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the father, has made him known" (NIV).

Pace Smail 143, I would rather say that Jhn.1:18 speaks of God's noncarnate son being uniquely close to the father, rather than his incarnate son, Jesus. Essentially it's a difference between huiology and christology. The noncarnate and nonanointed son, made the father known, *by becoming* Christ, the anointed son (incarnation). But Smail rightly noted that there are high claims which true of Jesus as son (the *huion*), are not true of the children (the *tekna*). Words of Gimli son of Glóin fit here: "like and yet unlike". "No one has ever gone to

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161 Calling Christian girls and women 'sons', on the assumption that only sons could inherit, is kind but mistaken. See D A Carson's *Inclusive Language Debate*, 1998:131-3, on that ESV fallacy.

heaven and returned. But the son of man has come down from heaven" (NLT: Jhn.3:13). A unique source; a unique being. We are neither source nor stream, though perhaps are little irrigation channels from the stream.

Let us rejoice in what we are, not "sharers in God's being[, but]… reflectors of his glory" (Smail 143). Though deity is fully himself independent of us—ah the happy home of trinity—we cannot be ourselves unless dependent on him. Take away the Dei from the Imago Dei, and the Imago cannot survive as a standalone (C S Lewis' *The Abolition of Man*). Grace is such that deity, not needing us in any way, shape, or form, overflows towards us in underserved love, graciously offering to partner with us in its salvation plan.

Part of our inheritance is Christlikeness (Rm.8:29). Regarding this new age, who can most enjoy the father? Jesus. Who can best please the father? Jesus. The more we become like Jesus, the better we can enjoy and please our heavenly father. "Christ is the definition of all that filiality means, and we were chosen…to become like him" (Smail 144). Like having a movie ticket without watching the movie, to become a Christian without becoming like Christ, would be a waste of our time. God's son became a man free of the world yet chained under Sinai, to create a messianic life beyond-Sinai life, into which folk can be adopted as children free from Sinai, and by the spirit can intimately call God *abba* (Gal.4:4-7).

Our inheritance here and now, is a rich potential, like a heap of Christmas presents in a great big stocking, all nicely wrapped up in bright paper. In this lifetime we may begin removing some of the paper, opening a few of the presents, enjoying them, playing with them, using them. So let's unpack a few of our presents.

New life

A new outlook and beginning. If *Genesis* looked at what is now the old order, there is a new *Genesis* individually for each of us. We are able to write new chapters with a new character, and a new focus, and a new hope, and a new destination. We can see how some writers, such as John and the Writer to the Hebrews, took that approach. So did Paul with his talk about a second Adam and new creation. Take *John*: In the beginning was…. *Hebrews* is based more

in Sinai as being the old creation, the old genesis. It then takes highpoints from that world, compares and contrasts them to messiah, and exclaims, *How much more!* Within are little go-backs, such as going back beyond Moses/Aaron to the High Priest Melchizedek, and "the thorns and thistles [of 6:8] are a direct reminder of Gen.3:17-8, where the curse on the land was to take this form and man's toil was to be called out to keep them down and to cultivate the land" (Guthrie 146): it sees bad/good growth as spiritual phenomena.

We used to be spiritually as slaves to the elemental spirits, στοιχεια/ *stoicheia* (LEB/NRSV: Col.2:8). For some that could mean "local presiding deities, the national 'gods' supposed to rule over the different areas and races of the world"—nowadays we could reword as Zeitgeist (the spirit of ideologies). It could even mean Sinai, having by the next salvation Level become "just another local and, one might say, tribal religion, composed like any other of allegiances, rules, and regulations, which function at a purely worldly level" (Wright 101-2).

The spirit of the cross has released us into a new world, birthed us into a new world. The previous story of exodus released Ethnic Israel into a Sinai-level of freedom and abundance. In messiah we have an exodus from both Egypt and Sinai, into what Paul called the true Jerusalem; from Ethnic Sarah, whom Paul called Spiritual Hagar. This new world in which we move and have our being, is not incarnation nor an extension of it, but is "the preliminary result and consequence of the incarnation" (Smail 146). Let us thank the father for this new covenant, a gift only possible by giving his son to die.

Christian inheritance is not the pie in the sky when we die, but is the steak on the plate while we wait. It channels in to the person and mission of the son, and within the flux of some world situations, can expose us to external suffering, persecution overt or covert.

Some texts even seem to say that unless we suffer, we shall not reign. They mean that unless we suffer *if required to do so*—our attitude to obediently suffer—we will not reign.[162] In the situation of the NT writings, it was almost a given. How can any Christian enjoy the

[162] The Christian-suffering theme was pretty common: eg 2 Cor.1:5; Php.3:10; Col.1:24; 2 Tm.2:11-2.

inheritance glories of Christ, if their way demands that they suffer, yet they refuse to tread that resurrection road?

Had Abraham been unwilling to face the pain of Isaac's death, we would not have heard of his name. We are not to run to persecution; in some situations we are to run from it; in some situations we are to embrace it. Beware the Prosperity Gospel—where to give financially to upliners is the 'kingdom' principle to escape suffering and embrace financial wealth. Beware a mushy Christianity where God is our daddy—or mummy—in some thorn-free rose garden.

Many because their spiritual orientation is Christian, face painful growth, Gethsemane and Golgotha experiences inherited in messiah. Consider the apostle Paul: "Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have travelled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from people who claim to be believers but are not.

"I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?" (NLT: 2 Cor.11:24-9—adjusted). I wouldn't like to make that job description my ideal career.

In short, part of our Christian inheritance is maturation, which can come through pain. I recall a story by Barry Chant. He had foretold that some young leader he knew was destined for great Christian work. His brother Ken had prophetically replied: "Not enough tears yet". Christian pain helps shape us through the storms, and as Leo Harris said, *We only really possess what we can hold under pressure*. "Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.... We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because he was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist" (Lewis 2002:142). But part of our

inheritance is that we have been granted an inner strength to deal with internal and external pain—Christ in us.

New land

Where *land* stands for lifestyle, for mental horizons, what's wrong with the land we were born with? Why buy into Christian land, new realities? Many have paid the conversion price with their blood; evangelism is a dangerous gift. For me, well, I've been hooked on Christianity from my early teens. With hormones kicking in, I sometimes wished it hadn't been a chain of truth that bound me to decent behaviour and honesty. Ah, the urges for autonomy, for freedom, for unaccountability. 'Jesus is lord' is, to many, anathema.

Ah the happy hippy dream (which post-modernism remoulded) of our own bag, doing our own thing, all being relative, there being no sin. Somewhat sadly, it's only wishful thinking. Jesus is lord and redeemer under God. Escape for the intellectual is difficult, but the heart can learn to enjoy captivity. But neither should Christians live outside the best of both worlds. Peter Forsyth held many Christians to be good people, loving Christ in measure but not really living as inheritors, not really tapping into the blessings and duties of God's children. He pictured the pre-crucifixion stage, where believers had the rights but not the realities of messianic familyhood (Jhn.1:12).

Mk.10:29-30 says that we can lose A, but gain A × 100 + persecution—with immediate life in sight. Fuzzy mathematics. Spoken before the Christian Age, even if "the age to come" is still to come, don't conclude that God has consigned to damnation everyone like Naaman and Orpah who didn't, perhaps couldn't, give up such things for the cause of the kingdom. To say Do *this*, gain *that*, does not necessarily mean that there is no other way to gain *that* without doing *this*. If I ask the neighbour to feed the cat the cat will get fed—but the neighbour might feed it anyway.

But in this saying, Jesus said that siding with him could risk excommunication from one's community, even one's family, even the geographical Promised Land. Messiah promised land. But was it worth risking the Promised Land one already had, the feel of dust for the feel of heaven? The challenge was to change perspective in the light of eternity. Before eternity, we can join others and together

form his *alēthinos* community, his family, his *land*—messianic blessings in this age now dawned, as distinct from the age and the ultimate promised land still to dawn.[163]

A couple of points. "Firstly, compared with the OT portrait of the Israelites' time in the land of Canaan, the modern State of Israel clearly lacks those elements which we have noted as prominent in *Genesis–Kings*. There is no temple to provide a sacred location, the population cannot be viewed as the covenant people of God, and there is no rest. Secondly, the NT writings look beyond the limited fulfilment of the promises associated with land in the OT to a much greater fulfilment" (Johnston & Walker 49).[164]

Land was basic to identity. We should look to our new identity. Ethnic Jews had covenantal right to ancestral plots of land, such as an Ahab would kill to get. Since our hearts will always be where our treasure is (Mt.6:21), Jesus challenged his audience to let him have their birthright, their vineyard, and become outsiders as they travelled to messianic land, the penultimate exodus. It was a command to spiritually relinquish, though the spiritual can impact the social. Persecution would soon force the issue. Abraham had been prepared to give up his ultra special son (Heb.11:17).[165]

Amazingly within years of messiah's death, many happily gave up their old land claims, downsizing to help the socio-economic poor among them (Ac.4:34-7)—they saw that land's spiritual meaning had transferred, morphed, to messiah. Is our vision adjusted? Jesus wished his audience to attitudinally wave goodbye to the

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163 Theology often has this Four Levels approach: common land (Gen.1:28—before language: a pre-alpha level); promised land (Sinaitic—the alpha level); promised land (Yeshuic fulfilled—the omega level); ultimate land (postmortal universe/heaven—post omega: beyond language). Ultimate land has never been tied to Levels 2 or 3.

164 Ethno-Zionists cite "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" of Level 2 land (Ps.122:6). Spirito-Zionists can use that text for praying for the peace of the church (Level 3 land). We are Jerusalem. Selectively the former seldom cite talk about physical circumcision (Level 2), while the latter happily speak of spiritual circumcision (Level 3), conversion.

165 The MEVV fail: it's not *only*, *one & only*, or *begotten*, but *unique* (HCSB/ISV).

geographical Promised Land, to embrace him as messiah. Those committed to him are neither to idolise the land as hajjis, nor defend it as land he had walked. Justice remains justice, and biblically the geopolitical land has become irrelevant theological chaff.

Title-deed inheritance was a prophetic inkling of the messianic age then to come. When the Sinaitic Covenant ended, Ethnic Israel's spiritual stake in the geographical land lapsed: all that land is now simply common land, desacralised. There has always been spiritual land linked to land levels. Mere empires come and go. "'They were a powerful people, and rich, and great builders. They built to last, for they thought their city would last for ever.' 'But what became of them all?' asked the Mole. 'Who can tell?' said the Badger" (Grahame 87). "Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God" (NLT: Heb.11:10): Spiritual Jerusalem. "It was because of him that I gave up everything and regard it all as garbage, in order to gain the messiah" (CJB: Php.3:8b).

The true land, and all it means—not the shakeable land of shadows (Mt.28:2)—is ours in Christ. We live communally within his boundaries and abundance. Abraham himself lived in common land. But he had an El Shaddai relationship—between the Gentile Elohim relationship (Level 1) and the Sinaitic Yahweh relationship (Level 2)—and Level 2 land promised. Interfacing Levels 1 and 2, he showed how by putting God first, Gentiles could as Abel be deemed righteousness. That same faith offers, in the evangel, Level 3, our true inheritance on the spiritual level.

Jesus' kingdom was not of this world. He taught his people attitude, not necessarily literal exactitude. Whatever their ethnicity and roots, the NT letters would address *Christians* as wanderers, the diaspora, unsecured by social identities, their true treasure and heaven-based identity, being, we may add, of most earthly good, since not socially competing for positions of identity.

Not all would be expelled from their families, from communities, geographic Israel, etc. But an inner leaving of such ties, a putting himself and his teaching above their other aims, was called for. A literal abandonment of connections and responsibilities is not in itself commanded, even as Abraham wasn't literally to kill Isaac, but we might find that we are cut-off by others (1 Cor.7:15).

But "Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields on account of me and on account of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, together with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life'" (LEB: Mk.10:29-30).

New kingdom

In line with Evangelicalism, I hold that fundamental individual response to God—decisionism—is required by God, and cannot be given by any third party: not *sola fide* but *fides necessaria est*. In line with Jesus' talk with Nicodemus, I hold that the blessings, once on a community basis, Sinai, are now individualised in the messianic kingdom which we can only join in messiah. Yet sola individualism is a serious error, unbalanced truth. 1 Cor.12:27—"all of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it" (NLT)—combines individualism and togetherness. Indeed we have received much, and much is required from us. There is much teaching given about discipleship. Failure at the individual, or the community level which Jesus spoke of as blessing (Mk.10:30), is serious failure, and both deserve consideration and commitment. But here I'll focus on glory at the individual level.

Kingdom kids

It's basic that we see our filiality with God the father. In the ethnic kingdom, Israel was Yahweh's son. For some it might seem strange, but the term son/child didn't have to imply genetic paternity. God has no genome. King Saul called David his son (1 Sam.26:25). Saul's genetic son Jonathan had a parity covenant, a covenant brotherhood, with David (brotherhood closer than marriage), but they weren't genetic brothers. Adam was a son of God (CEB/CEV/NRSV: Lk.3:38). In some cultures, older generations sometimes refer to young men as 'son', perhaps related to the extended family idea.

Within Sinai, the community of Israel was Yahweh's only son (Hos.11:1), an honorific term, occasionally individualised to highlight a few individuals whose special tasks were for the community (1 Chr.28:6). By entering the messianic revelation, people instantly become individually children of God (Jhn.1:12), a person to person,

not just a people to person, link. But it's wrong to say or sing that 'I am God's son', since that's a special term for Jesus only.[166]

Individualised kingdom is about spiritual birth, entrance insight about messiah and his mediated covenant. Patterns which were community assets within the Sinaitic community, have internalised in Christ, both globally and individually. Put another way, it's not to your church, it's to you within your church. The covenant is a familial covenant, each individual being precious, each sparrow watched—the father loves each of his children. As I've gone into in my *Prayer's Gone Global* book (ch.4), for us it should be the father first, though nowadays it's too often Jesus first and last with nowt in-between. *Jesus Onlyism* cheapens the blessing of being kingdom kids. If it's only Jesus on our minds, have we forgotten the father?

Here's a medley from various Onlyism songs. "Only Jesus can satisfy your soul; only Jesus brings redemption; only Jesus satisfies; Jesus only is our message; Jesus only will we see; Jesus all in all we sing; Jesus only is our saviour; Jesus only is our healer; only Jesus can our every sorrow know; [Jesus] alone can truly help us; you alone are God, Jesus!" Are God the father and God the spirit redundant and insignificant to songwriters, complications singers can well do without? Onlyism songs sound very far away from the biblical position and Jesus' teachings. Abba might not be in fashion, but Jesus was never the destination—he himself is the Way. He is the permanent temporal mode of the eternal uncreated second person of deity.

Thomas Smail wrote of God as the forgotten father. James White, perhaps reading that, wrote *The Forgotten Trinity*. Here's three daily prayers to develop and maintain trinitarianism. ① father, I love you; brother, I love you; helper, I love you. ② destination, I love you; way, I love you; navigator, I love you. ③ God, I love you; lord, I love you; spirit, I love you. Regularly thank the father for sending his son; his son for becoming one with us; the spirit for living with us.

And to go with Paul and disengage from the common 'the LORD' workaround for God's name, here's a daily catechism: Who is God? *The father is God!* Who is lord? *Jesus is lord!* Whom should we ask

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166 See my *Singing's Gone Global*, chapter 8.

in prayer? *Ask God, not the lord!* OK, these suggestions might shock some, and they could be more nuanced. They are but blunt pointers in the biblical direction, to help reverse the West's slow slide into Sabellianism. As James White noted, due to a generally poor understanding of the trinity, even Christians believing themselves to be orthodox can "slip into the ancient heresy…Sabellianism" (White 153). We're kids of the father, not of the son.

The paternoster looked beyond Jesus to the father. He and his son *are* one, yes, but the Greek neuter gender here implies a oneness of purpose, not of personhood (Jhn.10:30). The father was and is greater than he. Of course, in international management, a queen is greater than I, yet we are both human. Jhn.14:28's "greater than I" should be looked at contextually for its missional meaning.

Before the cross, Jesus' disciples would look to him for help. Just before the cross, he thought ahead (prolepticism). Whether or not Jhn.16:23a refers to them soon not needing to ask himself *for* things (NLT), or *about* things (ERV), 23b says that from then on their requests should go direct to their father because of the direct contact Jesus was just about to establish. Same applies to us. The father is God; Jesus is lord; ask God, not the lord!

What of Jhn.14:14—*Ask me*? Some might say it was only valid until the cross. I'd disagree. Some say that the text isn't a problem—go with the simpler KJV/NKJV! I disagree. Even with the complicating word *me*, if Jesus will respond indirectly by the spirit (though the text says *directly*), need we say more than that Jesus is indirectly asked? That is, we really ask the father and the spirit really responds.

So why would Jesus have spoken in direct terms if he were only an indirect party? Isn't it that he wished to show that he was vitally between the one asked (the father) and the one answering (the spirit)? He is the coordinating motif, God the son—it's about the messianic mission. Remember, the Holy Spirit directly responds, not Jesus.

It is a case of reading the wider immediate context, in order to get the meaning. Even in Western society, a building contractor can say that they will build you a house. This doesn't mean them directly. It means a dozen or so people of different skills (bricks, wiring, plumbing, etc) will be hired to do the work. What literalist other than Portia in Venice, would sue contractors for not doing it all by themselves *as*

promised? As kids of the father, let's ask him direct as Christians. It's part of our inheritance as loved by him.

Nevertheless, some Christians prefer mediated prayer. Asking deceased saints to pray for us helps us identify with them. That can be good, a kind of "You've been where I am, Saint Joseph, so it's you—rather than Saint Joanna—I'd like to ask to pass on this request." It's good to do biographical studies and to identity with previous saints—my *Prayer's Gone Global* looks at *Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*. It's good to show solidarity with others in prayer (eg Phm.22). So, if we build up rapport with Christians who have died, doesn't asking them to join us in prayer make some sense, even though it lacks biblical backing and can mislead?

Trouble is, whatever blessings might come from the above reasoning, asking Mary, Jesus, saints who have died, or fellow priests (and all Christians are priests), to ask the father on our behalf *as if he won't hear us directly*, misses the point that we now have a one-to-one inheritance link with him.[167] The problem is much reduced if we also ask our father directly. "Unfortunately, many modern Christians find it difficult to delight in the privilege of addressing the sovereign of the universe as 'father' because they have lost the heritage that emphasizes God's transcendence" (Carson 2010:415). May neither fear, nor any sense of unworthiness, ever hold us back from kingdom individualised.

So, it's fine to ask my co-inheritors to directly ask the father about my needs: both Paul and Philemon asked God for the same thing. I'm not against you asking Saint Joanna, once of Herod's household, to pray with you, though that's really not my thing. But your father's love should be so deeply ingrained within you, that you naturally go beyond this to him, as Paul did after Philemon prayed for him.

Over fifty years ago, I used to ask the lord for things, until Jhn.16:27 hit me. I suddenly saw that the father of my lord was himself aware of me, one who had waited long for me to speak, who himself loved me. A bit like the Great Lion waiting patiently at the pool for Jill Pole

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167 Smail lamented that the Charismatic Wave could wash away the idea of asking our father directly for our own needs (187). By asking Mary to pray for us, the Catholic Wave can encourage us to fear asking the father directly.

to begin a conversation, or walking alongside Shasta in the mist (*The Silver Chair*, and *The Horse and His Boy*, respectively: C S Lewis).[168] Picture young teenager me, cautiously kneeling at my bedside, apprehensive lest I be blasted for my audacity (if I was wrong), and overcome by the wonder of speaking to God *as my father*. Each Christian is a child of God the father, free to love him and to be loved, a coheir with Jesus.

Kingdom assurance

In the ethnic kingdom, there was one site for forgiveness, of assurance of continued kingdom rights. Assurance of forgiveness is a key of inheritance. Do you know the one about Adam passing the blame? He blamed his wife, she blamed the snake, and it didn't have a leg to stand on;) The story shows that Adam's sin corrupted interpersonal relationships upline (with God), sideline (with each other), downline (with nature), even intraline (inner disharmony). Oh, how true to life, for humanity, fallen away from God, disintegrates, since "sin, while it involves acts, is at its base relational failure" (Martens 55).

In Ethnic Israel, Yom Kippur (*Atonement Day*) was intended to realign the national drift (Ex.34:7; Ps.32:1-2) and to reinstall the relational operating system, while patches were applied individually throughout each year at point of need. Sinai forgiveness through rites was about keeping the temporary covenant link, rather than a matter of the heart or of ultimacy. With the new covenant, assurance of the open road of forgiveness into ultimate heaven, became internalised, individualised. The Yeshuic covenant is individualised. Every new member has God's love internalised (Rm.5:5): from the KJV's 'shed abroad' and ignoring its 'in', funnily enough I thought we shed it abroad by evangelism!

Though ultimate life (thus ultimate forgiveness/unblocking from sin) is not exclusive to Christianity, understanding its inner workings certainly is. In Christ we are made right with God, brought into the messianic kingdom. Since ultimate forgiveness can come through *outside* of Christ—but only *because* of Christ—the distinction *in Christ* is one

[168] The Narnian Chronicles never really brought Aslan's great father, the Emperor-over-the-sea, into everyday life.

of assurance. This connects to kingdom entrance: it was after Peter had mentioned Moses, David, and Jesus as the messiah, that he urged his ethnic people to repent so as to enter messiah's kingdom (Ac.2:36-8)—that was salvation. In short, immediate forgiveness/ entrance was a way to say that you are in, and be assured of it.

Immediate/messianic forgiveness is also assurance that we are ultimately forgiven/welcomed. Christianity has the only sacrificial site where the sacrifice was made once, and is potentially effective for all humanity since creation—God is outside and inside the timeline, the canvass of creation. If we're in his son we've passed from ultimate condemnation (*katakrima*: Rm.8:1). Unbelievable? Well, those who added to Paul, thought so.[169]

Yet the ultimate deliverance from sin's dominance, which the Anguished of Rm.7 so desperately sought, meant moving into solidarity with Christ. Those with an eschatological turn of mind might identify this with John's picture of the Mega White Throne (*megan thronon leukon*) judgment, which arguably judges only and all those who throughout human history have died internally aligned to the Beast (Rv.20:11-5).[170]

Whenever a Christian attitudinally sins, they are guilty and should feel guilty. But though it clouds their daily fellowship with God, it doesn't change their ultimate destination—ultimate condemnation doesn't apply to Christians and we should know it. How come?

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169 Some might cite the KJV at this point: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rv.22:18). For by adding to Paul that the lack of condemnation only applies to those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit", the KJV added to God's word. Rightly or wrongly, the CEV focuses on punishment as a corollary of condemnation. The NCV footnotes the KJV addition. The NKJV puts the addition as if canonical, but points out that the NU rejects it. The CEB/ERV/LEB/NABRE/NIV/NLT/NRSV are best, not even footnoting the addition: release from condemnation doesn't depend on our daily holiness.

170 This judgement would thus be a foregone conclusion, a true and just showcase trial, the universal revealing of their spiritual rebelliousness.

Because of the new solidarity, the workings of the spirit.[171] We have assurance of God's kingdom now, and God's kingdom to come. "Sinai's law had right but not might; Sin's law has might but not right; Salvation's law has right and might" (Manson 258—modified: only in the 1931 edition). The first is external; the second is internal; the third is both.

What of daily sins? The paternoster (Mt.6:9-13/Lk.11:2-4) [172] wasn't sourced from *Mark*. Was it perhaps one of those dominical sayings (what some call Q or Q variant) that Matthew and Luke felt that their target audiences should hear? Ernst Lohmeyer suggested two similar prayer-teaching accounts added by the church. But instead of postulating church constructions, we need simply allow that in different settings Jesus could have taught variations of his unique approach.[173] Still, it seems to me that Luke's record was a less poetical, perhaps more Gentile style, possibly for individual praying (father), while Matthew's was better structured for Jewish congregational praying (*our* father).

Is assurance based on immediately confessing daily sins? Though an aficionado of Lewisian writings, I have long thought his *Forgiveness* (Lewis 2002:3.7) and, incidentally, *Petitionary Prayer* (Lewis 1981:ch12), misleading. On the former, in spite of many gems, such as "all killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery", and Lewis rightly hating his sinful actions yet loving himself the sinner (do thou likewise), he failed to analyse the context of daily forgiveness.

Biblically we are assured that all who are in Christ are ultimately forgiven: ultimately sin is rejection of God, and Christians have shown their inner Godwardness (the passport to heaven) by their Christwardness (the passport to Christianity). Ultimate forgiveness isn't the focus of the daily paternoster. Indeed, its original audience were ethnic Jews, not the church. They had long understood that God could forgive without immediate sacrifice.

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171 Presumably *the Holy Spirit* rather than a principle, for Rm.8 is about as full of the Holy Spirit (20 times), as it is short of looking at human egos (30× in Rm.7).

172 While formally it is only for Matthew's account, I use it informally for both.

173 Carson 2010:409-13 covers the options well.

For instance, an ethnic Jew warned his people around the C3/2 BC, that if they were vengeful within the covenant, they would face Yahweh's vengeance, but if they forgave their fellow Jews who wronged them, their own sins would be forgiven when they prayed (Sirach 28:2).[174] Yet that forgiveness would have been based on doing *Leviticus* so far as possible, so Yom Kippur and the regular five offerings (even if only possible in desire) would have been the theological anchor for forgiveness (Heb.9:22). "In consideration of sacrifice, which generally by the very act itself indicated willingness to comply with God's provision, God in grace extended his forgiveness to the guilty" (Martens 65). God was also already father to the people *as a people*—basically their corporate father.

So short-term, the paternoster supplemented *Leviticus* under Sinai, though soon it gained a deeper meaning when the cross left Sinai as dead.[175] Deity forgiveness in fact predated Sinai, though some kind of sacrifice was common. "Your kingdom come" would soon be answered, and a new application begin—in fact the kingdom was stirring even as Yeshua spoke. We will get our fullest answer by the lord's second advent—in fact the kingdom is growing among us.[176] The answers to this prayer will have varied according to which side of the cross it has been asked.

What about for us praying, "Forgive us"? Is that based on Sinai? Let's look at relationships. Our human relationships get a hammering daily. Offence is given and taken, toes are trodden on, feelings wounded, plans upset, and damage unkindly done. God joyfully offers forgiveness to those who have rebelled against him. Heinrich Heine died saying, *God will forgive me. It's his job.* Don't count on it, Heine. We must qualify that it's God's nature to forgive, yet that his forgiveness depends on us to be forgiven.

Yes, it's God's nature, and his nature is within us. He wishes it to take root and develop, for we are children of his. In order for his nature to develop within us, it must be allowed to grow his way. This

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174 However, our acts don't force God to forgive, but if heart-based allow him to.

175 Similarly literal tithing was still to be done *before* the cross (Mt.23:3,23).

176 It is like growth like wheat, like waves of the incoming tide.

includes offering forgiveness to those who sin against us. Being like him, our relationship with him will flourish, and the daily sins we commit against him he'll happily brush aside, wash away.

But God can't forgive those who won't accept his forgiveness, though at least he's willing. If unlike him we're unwilling to forgive others, we'll prevent him from walking happily with us. "Walk happily with us, as we would happily walk with others", is the inner meaning of that prayer to us. It's pastoral forgiveness (household), not evangelical forgiveness (entrance). The paternoster focuses our attitudes towards being forgivers, fellowship builders, and our minds towards the daily need to be readjusted at the fellowship level: even Sinai had an optional fellowship offering (Lv.3).

James urged Christian sinners, the double-minded who were toggling between living towards God and living against God, to repent their sin. He probably spoke of significant drifts away from the father. He even threw in some Greek aorist tenses to underline the decisiveness needed in getting back to God the father.

But even pleasing James won't achieve sinless perfection in this life.[177] For daily walk with God, we still seek his daily forbearance, as we cultivate his attitude of forgiveness towards those who sin against us. But it is neither in order to gain, nor to guarantee, our *ultimate* forgiveness. That is already assured us.[178] That is the big

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177 Seeing some Bible versions using the word *perfect*, and that a major *Holy* Spirit upgrade is available to Christians, has led some folk into the idea that a decisive coming into holiness is available for Christians. Gaining Christ gains holiness (type 1), into which Christians ought to grow by the spirit (type 2). Holiness to God (type 1); holiness of God (type 2).

178 It is that decisiveness that Jesus actually implied by foot washing (Jhn.13), rather than daily cleaning, aorist tenses implying a one-off. Before the cross, the Eleven were clean as preconverts, but lacked the finishing touch which was likened to the end of journey foot washing. For them, that came by their master's death to complete the deal, so it is not a pattern for us—Jesus doesn't wash Christian feet but made Christian feet. The total bodywash illustration supersedes the preconversion bodywash-with-an-end-of-journey-footwash.

point: we stand forgiven by welcoming the cross into God's kingdom and we should know it. We have kingdom assurance. Be assured.

Kingdom priests

In the ethnic kingdom, priests had special access to Yahweh, and acted as mediators between him and his people. In our high priest we have inherited a priesthood. A variation on the priestly theme likens us to priests. Do I believe that women can be priests? Yes, whenever they become Christians—all Christians are priests. As regards ecclesiastical jobs, if they can do 'em, let 'em, I say, within the courtesy of not needlessly damaging toes.

Same goes for men and children. I don't say that all people are interchangeable, or even that the genders are fully interchangeable in function. But I do say that all those in Christ are equal *vis-à-vis* the father—and it's this level I'm focusing on. "We…have access to the father through Christ by the one spirit" (CEB: Eph.2:18). In fact, this precludes any priestly level within Christianity—Christianity is priestly. The term *priest* is, like *minister*, somewhat misleading even if the office holders do fantastic work.

All Christians are ministers, *diakonoi*, servants, even though some specialise as servants/deacons (Php.1:1), a specialisation not applying to the term *priest*, but applicable to those called elders/*presbuteroi* (Ac.15:22)—not all who in age were elder (πρεσβυς/*presbus*) were elders.[179] All Christians are priests with priestly access to the father. All Christians are ministers, servants under him. It can be hard.

Sharing with Jesus connection, we share the filial term *abba*. It was a term that Sinaitic Jews used when ensconced in their own families. Jesus referred it to God. *Daddy* is too limiting a translation. It means

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Conversion makes us totally clean before God—which water baptism symbolises—and daily sins are dealt with as we walk in the light (1 Jhn.1:7—present tenses to a Christian audience, unlike v9 (to a non-Christian audience?)).

179 A good case can be made linking them with the spiritual oversight as *episkopoi* of local congregations—what some call *bishops* (eg Ac.20:17,28). Meaning that for church oversight, only the age-mature should apply.

homeliness, family affinity, not immaturity, even if you're being battered left, right, and centre—as was Jesus in Gethsemane when he cried *abba* (Smail 41). But a term of privilege. Sadly, that special term gets abused. Understanding kingdom terms helps us understand kingdom connection.

In tracing the modern word *priest* back to its roots, one top Roman Catholic scholar confessed that the Greek term *presbuteros* meant elder: "The term priest as used today is not identical in meaning with the word presbyter as it was originally used." Welcome back, Erasmus, who also dethroned sacramentalism in Ehp.5:32! On Sinai, *Hebrews* "made it unmistakeably clear to any who…hankered after the ritual of the past, that Christ has…fulfilled, superseded, and abandoned…the priesthood of the OT" (Küng 364-5—rearranged). As for the church, the real word for priest, ἱερευς/*hiereus*, "is not used…anywhere in the NT for someone who holds office in the church" (Küng 364).

Küng didn't mean that only office holders aren't priests, but simply that since all Christians are priests, it was biblically misleading to use that tag for any specialism. That said, not all ecclesiastical office holders are Christians, even if called priests/bishops. Some wolves cross-dress as sheep; some sheep transition—or at times stray—outside of the flock! Küng contrasted the old to the new: sacrifices yes, but now mediated through Christ and about thanksgiving and praise; not external gifts but offering ourselves to God (Küng 369; Heb.13:15; Rm.12:1). All Christians are priests—thanks be to God.

The individualisation of priesthood is amazing. In the Yeshuic Covenant, priesthood is based neither on one's paternity nor subsequent election. Yeshua bypassed the priestly tribe of Levi/Aaron, and based his priesthood on that mysterious pagan character Melchizedek, a royal priest and type/pattern of priest to whom Ethnic Israel's priests bowed, as had Abraham.

Electing Christ elects to priesthood—conversion is consecration. We need no mediator other than messiah, nor is our duty the former Sinaitic duty of mediating for sinners. In Christ we have God's attentiveness—within the royal priesthood we're priests unto God (Rv.1:6), priestly service being worship: "John used images of [Ethnic] Israel to describe the…church" (Smalley 36). If a priest, are you enjoying your priestly part and closeness?

Kingdom temple

In the ethnic kingdom, the holy tent/temple became the very orb of national worship. Indeed, in crisis times, superstitiously some felt that all they needed to do was to claim the temple for total protection: "Yahweh's temple, Yahweh's temple, Yahweh's temple", they yelled and yammered (Jr.7:4). Yahweh heard, then demolished it. There has since been a fundamental redefining of temple. Are you a temple? Strange question? Whereas Christians often go first to *Genesis*, Judaists often go first to *Leviticus*, which is very much based around the tabernacle/temple theme. Understanding can be hard.

Bear in mind that Judaism began after Christianity, as a rethink over how to operate after Yahweh demolished the *second* temple by his Roman army. It differs from the fragmented intertestamental Jewish religion (IJR) into which Jesus was born, and is itself fragmented and ethnocentric. Paul died before Judaism began. Those Christians who think that it has Yahweh's approval, sometimes simply side with the reformulated State of Israel, even seeking for spiritually redundant animal sacrifices to be resumed.[180] Some non-Christian Jews also hope for a temple rebuild, reinstitution of cultus sacrifices, and a sense that Palestinians (unless Judaists) have been cleansed from their land, their borders secure. Should we back them?

No. Sadly still longed for, rebuilding the temple—once the pivotal community asset—is but futile. When they had Herod the Great's great temple complex, ironically some thought that Yeshua dared them to demolish it, their very hope to precede the messianic temple predicted by Ezekiel! Herod's temple enlargement plan had been going on for forty-six years (dating this dialogue at about AD 28), and the temple compound was only completed in AD 63, seven years before its demolition.[181]

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180 Some excitedly say that red heifers stand ready to be sacrificed in a rebuilt temple, allowing Jesus to return.

181 Some, saying that the term *naos* carried its narrower meaning of *most holy*

So much wasted time and effort. But even his literalist disciples didn't understand at the time, that Jesus was God's true/*alēthinos* temple: "some things 'predicted' in the [OT] were not set out as verbal predictions, but as pictures, events, peoples, institutions" (Carson 1991:182). Miraculous signs (σημεια/*sēmeia*) given in Jerusalem (Jhn.2:23) were generally unheeded by its leadership: Nicodemus was an exception (3:2). Jesus had declared himself the true temple-site where God's glory was, but even his close disciples didn't make sense of it until they had witnessed his resurrection.

The NT puts much weight on Christians being 'in Christ' as their point of identification. In line with this, they can say that while messiah is the light of the world, they too are that light (Jhn.8:12; Mt.5:14). Yahweh's Servant would be the light to the Gentiles (Is.49:6): the messianic community too were that messianic light (Ac.13:47). Likewise, Yeshua was the temple which the physical buildings had predicted: we are temples individually (1 Cor.6:19), communally (2 Cor.6:16), and globally across the generations (1 Pt.2:5-7), the loci of the Holy Spirit. And a cosmic temple is yet to be.

Yes, a temple upgrade awaits. Paul predicted Jesus, under God his father, having total command over all creatures and circumstances, the supreme commander until the point when his father, the king of the king over all human monarchs, takes over (1 Cor.15:27-8):[182] his

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place, *inner sanctum*, note that that was built in under 2 years about 46 years earlier, and reckon that the Greek aorist verb must be consummative—as if "it was built 46 years ago." This would allow dating Jesus' death at AD 33. I think it's more likely that they would have used the wider meaning of *naos* to contrast 46 years of building to Yeshua's presumed nonsense of 3 days.

182 "…all in all" (1 Cor.15:28) in context is soteriological, not metaphysical: "it is not the absorption of Christ and mankind, with consequent loss of distinct being, into God, but rather the unchallenged reign of God alone, in his pure goodness" (Barrett 361). Once the irredeemable is subjugated by Christ, the redeemed will be joyfully presented to God the father, who will then be "utterly supreme over everything everywhere" (NLT). Paul's setting was of the True Adam authoritatively bringing harmony to chaos, and abundant harvest gratefully to God. One could also think of the true Joshua/Jesus, and the true conquest of Canaan allowing for the harvest.

father appointed him as messianic lord (Php.2:11). Like J R R Tolkien's story in which Aragorn entered Minas Tirith to be its king, God the father shall ultimately take his place among us, as if the true glory has only just come (Rv.21:22)—but what marvellous tasters are ours! We have inherited Jesus' temple status.

Interestingly, Scripture speaks of the church—both globally and represented locally—as being messiah's *bride* (Eph.5:32). Yet this is before the wedding—he's making arrangement for her to be ready for the wedding (not 'marriage'). Oh, how badly Hollywood yearns to brainwash us by its idea that a hero is only happy to die for a heroine if he's slept with her! Christ died for his chaste bride/his holy temple.

Paul could picture the Christian congregation at Corinth *as if* his daughter. It was *as if* he had betrothed her, with her consent, so she was a wife, but being a wife should remain a virgin until her wedding (2 Cor.11:2): Paul feared spiritual adultery (Jr.3:8). Our *marriage* to messiah is similar in that we yearn for the *wedding* feast when we may fuller enter our true home (Rv.19:7: CEB/CEV/ERV/LEB/NABRE/NCV/NIV/NLT).[183] In Jesus' days, a groom would escort his bride from her family home. PS: Theologically, *engagement* is a shoddy word, and sacerdotal talk of the church *marrying* couples, is silly and senseless.

Anyway, all that's to come. Back to the picture of us being God's temples. It's good to recap the movement from tabernacle/tent to fixed temple, then to Jesus (who is God's son's pitched temple-tent: Jhn.1:14). He was what then typologically prophesied God's glory among us. He in turn enables humanity, through transformation by his spirit, to be as individuals temples, as congregations, temples, and together over the Christian millennia to be God's temple on earth, until the father ultimately pitches his permanent temple-tent site (σκηνη/*skēnē*) with redeemed humanity (Rv.21:3).[184]

It's good to recall that the tent was where Moses especially would meet with Yahweh, and come out with a glowing face. Once Aaron

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183 The MEVV get Lk.14:8 right; the NKJV/NRSV get the significant Rv.19:7 wrong. We need to see that marriage is God-instituted/defined. Redefinitions are denials of God, fantasies called facts, ethics gone to pot.

184 On the temple, see G K Beale's *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 2004.

took over as high priest, only high priests in his line were allowed to enter into the central tent/temple area (the shrine/most holy place, ναος/ *naos*), and then only once each year, as national servants to deep-clean the nation, making it clean to approach. Ethnic cleansing?

If we're Christians, we too were prophesied, prophecies of the cosmic temple still to come. In this age, we are individually worship sites, mobile temple-tents that signal God's nearness and the knowledge of forgiveness. Each of us has become a shrine, a most holy place, a *naos* (1 Cor.6:19), where God indwells in covenant. At times we come into a local worship site, a local congregation (1 Cor.3:16-7),[185] as part of a bigger thing. At times, as assemblies, we reflect on the bigger picture again, the church worldwide which spans mere millennia (1 Pt.2:5), Global Israel.

In the ethnic kingdom, Jerusalem was geographical. Is it too much to ask if Jesus' talk about us being like a city on a hill (Mt.5:14), had in mind Jerusalem-Zion, home of the temple? Is.60 spoke of Yahweh's light going to the Gentiles (3), with Jerusalem being the obvious imagery. She would be called "Yahweh's City, Zion, of the holy one of Israel" (CEB: 14).

Paul used the illustration of ethnic Jerusalem. Having been God's focus in salvation history, by clinging to that past once his plan had switched to global ("Jerusalem in its present state" (NJB: Gal.4:25)), she had become as much a slave as Hagar had been, spiritually a Gentile, the pre-alpha, pre-Davidic level of common humanity (Rv.11:8). The Snake, which had been a blessing in Moses' time, had become a curse in Hezekiah's (2 Kg.18:4)—an instance of Level 2 (Sinai) reverting to Level 1 (pre-Sinai) of the Snake.

Hagar's child was in Yahweh's will, though in his lower and common noncovenant plan.[186] Egyptian-born—like Jacob's people had been

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185 Compared to the pagan temples in Corinth, and the wonderful one in Jerusalem, their disunity made them seem a poor relation: Is.53:2.

186 Abraham had guiltlessly assumed that Yahweh had meant him to follow a non-sinful Hittite custom, marrying Hagar as a secondary wife. Moreover, Ishmael was looked after by Yahweh, and featured in biblical comparisons. Their story was meant to continue.

just before the exodus—Hagar settled with Ishmael in Midian (now Saudi Arabia), which incorporates Mount Sinai. By ignoring the call to move onto the messianic land (True Canaan), Ethnic Israel had, by and large, theologically settled alongside Hagar in Sinai—common land. The true Joshua had indeed given them the option of choosing true covenant or reversion (Jos.24:15).

Meanwhile, Global Israel, beginning with righteous remnants of Ethnic Israel, had moved on towards the next stage of promised land, wherein is the city of true (αληθινος/*alēthinos*) peace, though even spiritual Jerusalem now, is a shadow of spiritual Jerusalem yet to be—the ultimate level. We have shalom-harmony with God. The definition of *Israel* had moved on; the definition of *Jerusalem* had moved on; the definition of *temple* had moved on—much had moved on and left many behind, cut off from the root plan. The New Jerusalem was to be the temple radiance from God's hill, shining forth to a hostile wo rld God's love, redemption, and new covenant. If you are a Christian, a mobile messenger of Yahweh's shalom, you are yourself a Jerusalem. Let your holy light so shine—and rejoice.

Kingdom prophets

In the ethnic kingdom, prophets were major players. Now, the prophetic spirit is individualised. Hearing God is part of our inheritance. When Jesus spoke about the most honoured of OT prophets, he named John the Baptist (Mt.11:11). John fitted the Elijah role as messenger. Moses had set up Sinai, and Elijah had played a crucial part within Sinai, but John directly prepared for what had been the ultimate goal of Sinai, the passing of the baton to messiah, as Sinai bowed out gracefully before the new *berith*—covenant.

This was history's crux, more significant than even Abraham becoming the faith pattern, or Moses mediating the Sinaitic Covenant, or Aaron heading up the cultus, or the great prophets who directed Ethnic Israel. And to think that some have said that the NT church was an afterthought, or even a subtheme in an ethnic master plan!

Mt.11:11 contrasts the words *micro* and *mega*, and context refers to advancement. The least (micro) Christian probably isn't as holy in lifestyle as John had been, nor as dynamic in God's kingdom, yet is

more enviable than John was, for unlike John they are within the messianic community. It's a position beyond John's wildest dreams. Each Christian is mega enviable, better placed than the greatest prophet of Ethnic Israel had been.

Even Christians, suffering social intimidation and exclusion in Asia Minor, "were more privileged in the perspective of redemptive history, than they could have known—more privileged than either the great prophets of old or angels above" (Jobes 105).[187] The Sinaitic Mountain (salvation Level 2) dwarfed world religions, yet even the Yeshuic foothills (salvation Level 3) dwarf Sinai's pinnacle. Under Sinai, Moses wished that all would have Yahweh's spirit (Nb.11:29); under Yeshua, all may prophesy (1 Cor.14:31).[188]

John the Baptist's generation, urged to repent (Jr.3:12), waited for messiah's mission, and it was epochal. John's prophetic insight pales alongside entrance level Christianity—which boasts not of itself but of its lord. Contrasting John's pre-Christian generation to ours, we see that Christ's mission made a fundamental shift towards God. He is as he claimed, the way, the truth, and the life.[189]

The basic level insight of each convert is likely to be something like the key to the kingdom, redemption, the newness of the kingdom, its joy, peace, love, meaningfulness, or cleanness. Different people see the doorway differently, but the prophetic vision was of Jesus who is the door. The spirit alone enables entrance, and within we meet the father. This is a prophetic message.

It may be significant that the Baptist expected community rescue, more than salvific individualisation. His national hopes tried to

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187 C S Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet* pictured angels as universal creatures, immortal photosomatic beings, roaming the galaxies, standing amazed by God's redemptive work upon earth—how marvellous, how wonderful.

188 Paul taught sensible deployment of this non-preaching ability. Glossolalia is likewise open to all, and not all should publicly practice it loudly in meetings.

189 Jhn.14:6 specifies God as father, not God as God. Maybe Hinduism accesses God as God, but Jesus is the only way to God *as father*, Christianity's unique selling point. For Jhn.14, think 123—1 mention of God, 23 mentions of the father: incidental but helpful.

interpret his prophetic feelings: Israel-Judah had long deemed itself to be the global hub. God had given John specific help to prepare for and to identify messiah.[190] Some of the righteous remnant had become his disciples, and when he identified Jesus as messiah, some switched from messenger to messiah.

But still not everything was clear to John. Earlier misunderstandings continued. Yohanan had long known that his cousin Yeshua was exceptionally holy. So he was shocked when Jesus asked him to immerse him. After all, John's baptism ritual was obviously linked to national repentance, yet obviously his cousin didn't need to repent—so he had tried to talk him out of it.[191]

Having given in, he saw the dove, the sign that God had spoken to him about, and realised that his cousin Jesus was messiah. Yet wearing national glasses—like Pontius Pilate—John still thought that Jesus' kingdom (as heir of King David) was ethnocentric/earthly, not christocentric/heavenly (Mt.11:3; Jhn.18:36).

Prophetic vision now comes with free heavenly glasses for all—and what a vision! Within each local church, each Christian may prophesy as part of the charismatic skills base. While we should not confuse spirit-baptism with Christian assurance (*pace* James Packer), the former is deepened by the latter: "Where there is no assurance of the relationship with the father, there cannot be any great expectation about the operations of the spirit and his gifts" (Smail 149). The skills are best exercised from within the deep assurance of filiality.

But no matter how deep, our prophecies aren't canonical. As Paul taught, to keep things on track, others should weigh what's purported to be prophecy, and correct any glitches. Of course this can be hard, especially when the clouded vision is a prophetic song with pleasing content, a thrilling tune, and a high woo and wow

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190 John was, like Abraham, a link between salvation levels. Like Abraham, he had a message of righteousness. Level 2 and Level 3 had righteousness for their covenant, but the latter was deeper, more profound (Mt.21:32; 5:20).

191 And indeed Jesus hadn't needed to repent but had needed to identify with John's work so as to affirm it by reduplication and fulfilment.

factor. And funnily enough, charismatic churches seldom encourage their members to critique songs anyway.[192]

Christian revelation is far beyond the best insights of the ancients. Charismatic prophecy is in fact a minor though blessed sideshow, enriching the church. All Christians are in the prophetic school. We might not all foretell/predict, but we may all forthtell/proclaim as prophesiers of God, low level prophets, as it were. Paul taught that Christ established Christian prophets and also Christian evangelists—specialists. Both should work side by side (Eph.4:11).

Has not evangelism taken on part of Christ's prophetic message? It proclaims the new message, and gets on well with the element of predictive prophecy. The latter functions at various levels as messages in line with Scripture, geared to situations where we need to hear what God is saying to the churches and to us. To some extent even this spirit of prophecy, this hearing ear, is open to us all although some specialise in it. But let us judge with caution. Each of us can hear from God through script and spirit, and speak for God.

Confused yet cosmic and confident kids

At the end of the day, we will probably all have to face confusion, if we're going to grow.[193] Smail highlighted Gethsemane as the pinnacle of failed request. "The continuing superficiality and immaturity of so much that passes for charismatic renewal is closely related to the fact that it seeks through all sorts of instant-answer expedients, to evade that participation in the failure and suffering of Christ which is a central though not the final component of Paul's Christ-centred exposition of our inheritance in the spirit" (Smail 152). Our crosses are not his cross, but they—the sufferings we must bear—are roughly the same shape.

Smail's failure talk in the quote above, was I think in error. In context he assumed that the Gethsemane cry for deliverance, failed. If it was to avoid Golgotha, perhaps so—though by mutual consent. If it was to avoid Gethsemane, perhaps not.

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192 For some issues, see my *Singing's Gone Global*, chapters 6-9.

193 Denominations spring from confusion and foster confusion. That's life!

But certainly in this life, as Christians we will know suffering and probably failure. We can all feel hyped-up by believing prayer/ prophecy, yet failure can show that it was misguided. Perhaps we admit that it was soul-believing, not spirit-believing. The rub is that neither it, nor God, *worked*. We feel that we have failed, been failed.

Such is life. Expectations can be in error; heaven can be silent; we can be deaf. Where is God when you need him most? Absent? If you mourn, do your prayers seem to meet with heaven's doors being slammed shut and double bolted (Lewis 1966:7)? "Talk to me about the truth of religion and I'll listen gladly. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I'll listen submissively. But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion, or I shall suspect that you don't understand…. How well the Spiritualists bait their hook!" (23).[194]

Later, surfacing from his depression, C S Lewis came to see that his inner psyche had locked God out. "I have gradually been coming to feel that the door is no longer shut and bolted. Was it my own frantic need that slammed it in my face? The time when there is nothing at all in your soul except a cry for help may be just the time when God can't give it: you are like the drowning man who can't be helped because he clutches and grabs. Perhaps your own reiterated cries deafen you to the voice you hoped to hear" (40).

Bereavement in itself, is not exclusive to Christianity. Christianity provides resurrection hope, but is not the answer to the pain of loss. Some Christians will have expected God to have prevented their pain and loss: *Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.* Is God a very absent help in times of trouble? Yet is not death part of life, and our suffering to be turned into blessing, to depth? And remember, our inheritance has light as well as dark sides.

On the other side of the coin, see that "what God says about you is true—you are born of God, a new creature in Christ, indwelt by Christ, and you can do all things through Christ! Your feelings may tell you that you are defeated, frustrated, struggling against overwhelming odds, but God's word says that you are more than any conqueror, a

194 In his atheist years, C S Lewis had been hooked on the occult. On Spiritualism, see Hakes 2020.

devil-defeater, master in all circumstances, and standing on the threshold of unlimited possibilities—in Christ—and through faith in his word" (Harris 20).[195]

But there is death and there is life, sometimes in tension, and death can lead to life. But how can we add Harris to Smail, so to speak? Jesus' death was a pattern for us in a number of ways, our inheritance leading to our inheritance. Let's see how the Greek words for *cross* and *death* can relate to us.[196]

1# Gal.5:24: We have decisively crucified our former nature.
2# Rm.6:6: Our former nature has been decisively crucified.
3# Gal.2:19-20/6:14: We live in results of having been crucified.
4# Col.3:5: We must decisively part from our former nature.
5# Rm.8:13: We must daily be putting to death our former nature.

We can construct something like this from this data, both evangelistic and existential. Our acceptance of Christ was our initial decision which crucified the life we had lived (1#), which God has spiritually cut us off from (2#). Subsequently the life we live in Christ is based on the result of this crucifixion (3#), yet the former life seeks to get back into dominance. We ought not give it even an inch lest it become a ruler (4#), and this decision must be renewed daily (5#). It's a mixture of us and God having done (evangelistic), and having still to do (pastoral). No text tells the full story. The cross was like a door from the darkness into the light: we are to live in the light, rejecting the repeated calls from the darkness. Remember Lot's wife!

And there's an eschatological dimension of inheritance that's future, to wit, bodily immortality (Rm.8:23), bodily synchronisation to spirit, when at last we will know as we are known. Confusion like chaff will

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195 https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/64714952/five-keys-of-authority

196 These words are:
1# Cross-crucifixion: εσταυρωσαν/*estaurōsan*—aorist indicative active
2# Cross-crucifixion: συνεσταυρωθη/*sunestaurōthē*—aorist indicative passive
3# Cross-crucifixion: συνεσταυωμαι/*sunestaurōmai*—perfect indicative passive
4# Death: νεκρωσατε/*nekrōsate*—aorist imperative
5# Death: θανατουτε/*thanatoute*—present indicative active

be blown away. The spirit is a pledge, like Judah's seal to Tamar, a token of a greater gift to come, and visible evidence of a promise made. It's a commitment, some say like a betrothal ring,[197] of that crossing into life: 2 Cor.1:22; 5:5; Eph.1:14 (αρραβον/*arrabon*).

David Petts (Pentecostal), asked if besides deliverance from infernity, infirmity was in the atonement, replied Yes, adding the qualifiers *ultimately*, and *indirectly*. In simple, sometimes deific healing can be switched on in this age, and some will benefit; ultimately such healing will be fully applied on entering the age to come, and all the redeemed will benefit. Smail made a similar point about our inheritance: some "have either pushed the whole inheritance on into the apocalyptic future where it has very little present relevance, or on the other hand they have made enthusiastic and unrestrained statements about what can be expected in the present" (Smail 153).

Some travelling charismatic roadshows have triumphantly blitzed towns and moved on, leaving behind both triumph and trauma. I guess that Smail had had to clear up much mess. Well, some such shows have proclaimed too much inheritance now—but some shows have proclaimed too little. When Smail spoke of never questioning the faith of those not healed or such, I suspect that he pastorally overreacted. There are surely times when some do not receive because they do not believe, and times when they believe but do not receive. Personal faith is a factor among factors. How many people over the millennia have been simply healed physically out of the blue, without expecting that they might?

Paul prayed that God as hope-giver, would bless Christians with abundant joy and peace as they trusted him, so that through the power of the Holy Spirit they would overflow with hope (Rm.15:13). Smail employed the term, hope, as being future, as in faith for now, hope for later. For now we have the firstfruits of our inheritance.

Yet "it is not just that we *have* the firstfruits of the spirit in our own lives and fellowship, but rather we *are* the firstfruits of the new creation, in which God's purpose in making the world will at last be

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197 Betrothal is deeper than engagement. Engagement can be broken; betrothal can only be divorced.

fulfilled" (Smail 156). Paul spoke of the frustration that creation suffers from while it awaits the revealing of God's children, the time when we will no longer be confused but will be cosmic (Rm.8:19).

But for now, much of our inheritance will be unwrapped through prayer. And we must rely on the spirit, which will include the revelation he has brought through Scripture, as well as his internal presence being active. Yonggi Cho well said that there is a big difference between the spirit being resident, and being p-resident. Sure, the wordplay only works in English—and Scripture made some points through wordplay—but it makes a valid point. Sadly, sometimes the spirit is merely a silent partner in the business of life.

Following Cho led me into asking the spirit for things (cut out the middleman?). But I no longer follow him on that. What changed me was the trinitarian understanding in general that the spirit is not the destination, but the navigator, and specifically not the prayer destination, but the prayer navigator. The Bible pictures the spirit as within—here you could use the picture of someone sharing your caravan or travelling tent—who inspires us to look upwards, metaphorically, and cry Father (Rm.8:15).[198]

The spirit helps us to write to our father (26), and Jesus delivers the letter, so to speak. Some deny Paul's meaning here to be glossolalia because, they say, Paul spoke of *all* his fellow believers, but not *all* spoke in what was to them unlearnt language. That's a lame

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198 We are used to the idea of believing in a person, but not so used to the idea of living in a person, or a person (other than a baby) living in us. It's like the inner-you shares the outer-you with someone else, as two share a house. It might encroach into the incarnational. This thought "is expressed simply by using the preposition in. Just as the father is in the son (Jhn.14:11; 17:21,23) so the son is in the father (Jhn.14:11,20; 17:21) and this set the pattern for believers. They are in the son (Jhn.14:20; 17:21), and he is in them (Jhn.14:20,23; 17:23,26); equally they are in the father (Jhn.17:21), and he in them (Jhn.14:23)" (Marshall 2004:522). "No one who denies the son has the father, but whoever confesses the son has the father as well. Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the son and in the father" (NABRE: 1 Jhn.2:23-4). See also Rm.14:17; Jhn.7:38-9.

objection: Paul need only to have covered a general norm within the C1 church. Some say that because glossolalia was related to praise in *1 Corinthians*, Paul would not have used it in *Romans* for intercession. Why exclude dual use?

Paul saw both glossolalia and thoughtful praying and singing to be horses for courses. On the one hand, praying by the spirit is prayerful communion with God without our reason formulating our thoughts and feelings into comprehensible language—supra-rationality, not irrationality. On the other hand, praying by our mind is rationally thinking through what we seek, weighing it up. It was not that one type of prayer, or singing, was in itself better—they did not compare (1 Cor.14:14-5).[199]

I see no good reason to reject that at one level, glossolalia can throughput a mass of weight from deep within us. However, I can happily hold that the principle both includes glossolalia and is broader, in that the spirit can tap into our deepest level *qua* Christians, releasing issues emotionally, cathartically, to our father.

But however we read this text, it's not about us praying *to* the spirit, but *by* the spirit helping—us praying *to the father*. Through messiah we have access by the spirit to the father (Eph.2:18). The NT does not even encourage us to petition the lord, let alone the spirit. Our inheritance runs along trinitarian lines, trinity life.

And God can be trusted. Therefore, we can be justifiably confident as inheritors. As Paul put it, since the father even gave us his son to save us, will he not with the son give us all that we need (Rm.8:32)? His "present and abiding love may be utterly trusted in the midst of accusation and condemnation, all physical deprivation, religious persecution, demonic interference, natural calamity (34-9)" (Smail 158). Pictured in many ways, we have spiritual enrichment.

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[199] Grammatical 1 Cor.15:14 has *my spirit*, and v15 has *the spirit*. Translators make judgement calls. Should v15 read A# *the* spirit/*the* mind, B# *my* spirit/*the* mind, or C# *my* spirit/*my* mind? I think it fully justified to opt for B#, but not for C#. For the MEVV, I would roughly put the CEB/NLT/NRSV top, the NABRE/NKJV middle, and the CEV/ERV/LEB/NCV/NIV bottom.

Chapter 10

Our Father's Will

Obedience: response to grace by grace

Obedience is a key component of familyhood with God. Other components include revelation, communication, love, and joy. We are to be, like the son, obedient. We shan't please our father as we should, if we aren't. We shan't enjoy our father as we should, if we aren't. We won't help others as we should, if we aren't.

The son's obedience was perfect as passive obedience (Lk.2:49), but became perfect hammered obedience (Heb.5:8). Through all the levels of his humanity, Christ was perfect according to where he was at. But a perfect child is not a perfect adult; nor is a perfect adult a perfect baby. At any age, his sandals were beyond our size, and we can but aim for approximation. Indeed, if you think that a thankyou is appropriate response to a benefit given, is it difficult to think that obedience should be a response to past and ongoing grace?

In its days, by grace the torah[200] gave filiality to all under Sinai. The obedient were nurtured; the grossly disobedience were cut off; most were simply maintained. Under messiah, the gospel offers filiality to those it calls to be obedient, regardless of whether they become so. That is God's grace of giving—regardless, string free. For our sakes, grace calls out for obedience. That is God's grace of fruition.

Obedience to the father is obedience by adoptees to their new top-down home, where the benign father rules as lord—over the lord—for our wellbeing and maturation. Incidentally there is no benign adoption triad, triangle, or circle: the fallen world of our spiritual past is not to be revisited, nor to play any part in our lives, though

[200] We should note that moral law existed at the common level, and that within Sinai there was covenant-specific law (torah/instruction). Often the NT does not differentiate such, but at its time of writing probably didn't need to.

in practice sadly it does. Ideally "to be in God's grace is to be in his obedience, because it is our obedience that keeps us close to him and to the protection, fulfilment, provision and joy that fellowship with him brings" (Smail 159-60).

Obedience is actually a sensible response to grace, since grace offers lordship only for our enrichment. It goes back to *Proverbs*, where Lady Wisdom is contrasted to Dame Folly: we're foolish if we follow Folly. Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. Jesus, God's son as a human being, one with us, prioritised the spiritual. Encouraged not to talk with a woman who was even—how shall we say it, um, of a hostile race, and herself rather, um, dubious—he replied that doing his father's will was like strong food and drink to him (Jhn.4:34). Obeying his father's mission extended even beyond human blood feuds.[201] It has gone global.

Later he taught his disciples that if they remained in obedience to him, they would remain in his love, even as he remained in obedience to his father, and so remained in his father's love (Jhn.15:10). Disobedience is walking away from love. Obedience is allowing love to perfect us.

I once had a vision where the spirit as my guide, was taking me to—to go back to Bunyan—Celestial City. Along the way there were points of interest which he wished to show to me, enriching my journey. Wayward, at times I would guide myself, straying into painful parts of the land where I was the loser. Yet my guide, though not allowed to guide, remained with me, and suffered with me. Each time I fell into despair, sensibly I invited him to resume navigation—we were by the bye, walking. He'd happily do so, saying however that because of time wasted, we'd have to skip some points of delight he'd hoped to show me, but at least we'd be back on track.

God graciously enables us to be obedient to him. By the spirit he has given us a desire to obey. It is true that that desire can sometimes be buried deep—but it is there. Even as by the spirit we call out to God as abba. The NT goes into much depth about how besides common-

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201 Yes, Jews and Samaritans were still killing each other. Audaciously Jesus even wrote a story about a good Samaritan showing grace to a Jew! Incredible.

law/principles (νομος/*nomos*), there was for a time Sinaitic law, torah-law, making clearer the kind of lives humans were meant to live. The torah included much symbolic law, concealed prophecy.

For instance, it spoke of animal sacrifices as if they that did not deserve to die, had their lives taken in exchange for human lives which deserved to die. That laid an understanding for when God's son would become like a sacrificial animal (*Agnus Dei*), though he died voluntarily for potentially all humanity, and overcoming death in the fight—for sacrifice doubled as battle—rose from death unto immortality and newness.

But in short, the torah-law, while mixing in much prophetic symbolism, helped in better showing how we were to live—good insight. On the other hand, by expanding on holiness, it did make it look rather harder to live as deity wished us to live, and only its hidden prophecy could help. In a very real sense, torah-law could only take us as far as death and dump us; the prophecies could take us beyond death into familial-law, the new creation.

Some ask when exactly did the Sinai Covenant die. I'd say that it was exactly when messiah died under it. From the other viewpoint, it was then that Yahweh's wife, Ethnic Israel, died to him in covenant annulment. Divorce killed the relationship stone dead. Tetelestai.

One way Paul put it to his fellow ethnic Jews, was that it was a bit like having been married to the torah as to a husband. That had been a good blessing so far as it went, but it did not go far enough. The picture works, by the way, on the biblical idea that marriage is a covenant. And in fact, since Christianity is a different covenant, it was spiritual adultery—unlawful polyandry—to hold both the torah and Christianity, Moses and Messiah (conflicting husbands/covenants). By messiah's death (Rm.7:4) they had died to Sinai and it to them—the marriage bond was thus terminated. And Christ having been birthed from death, therefore it was proper for them to marry him into messianic life, God's global plan, his global will. "Now we can serve God in a new way by obeying his spirit" (CEV: 6). New Covenant *fruit*.

Obedience: to and by the father

As Paul put it, in response to God's grace, we should consider—Paul often varied his pictures—ourselves as bought by, and thus

belonging to, God, even at the physical level. Remember how in ch.6 we looked at the temple theme? Each Christian is a most holy temple, an inner shrine, of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19-20).

Our very sexuality is not simply a "my body" matter—our bodies are God's, and are an offering to him in our totality. How our creator wishes us to live sexually is for us to discern, not to decide how we wish to so live. Fornication is verboten; marital fun is inhouse management; celibacy has its place. Will society ever get it right?

Sadly, some even consider that though God alone can, and has, defined marriage, human civic authority can now redefine as if plastic in its hands—the poison of subjectivism is viral. On Earth, marriage is specific to humanity, and can only exist within God's definition. Any other definitions *cannot be* marriage, only at most definitions of so-called marriage, oxymorons of human rebellion.

Indeed, Paul reminded Christians not to be swayed by rebellious humanity, but in view of God's mercies, to offer their bodies as if animal sacrifices yet alive, holy, and pleasing to God—unlike the Sinai pattern of slain and involuntary sacrifices (Rm.12:1). The idea here being that your body represents your totality, even as your sacrifice is a total, *hôlâ*, offering unto God, where all was burnt, wasted so far as the world was concerned, entering as it were the spiritual domain.

We should not conform to the outside world, but as members of his family should offer ourselves decisively to God, as did Jesus. Within the spiritual domain, "don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him" (CEV: Rm.12:2). Although there are Christian principles which offer basic direction, we should also factor in listening to the spirit, by which means Jesus saw that a man born blind had been born so by his father's plan (Jhn.9:3,7,39).

Our father will, if we let him, guide us by his spirit. That requires a sensitivity that springs from our fellowship with him, a sensitivity which Jesus had on earth. Jesus had a programme (Lk.4:18-9), had principles (Tanak) with a perfect hermeneutic, had a goal (Mt.16:21), but also had "special insight about the father's will in different sets of circumstances" (Smail 162).

Let's be mindful of Rm.12:1-2. Those so offered can be so renewed, whereas minds conformed to the world-view of the rebellious world will hardly be open to discerning God's will, which can be at odds with worldly thinking. Paul's point of letting God renew our minds carries the idea of renewal increasing, and is based on obedience. And incidentally, we must both let *him*, and *help* him by cooperation in wisdom, such as feeding our minds aright (Eph.4:22-4; Php.4:8). Discerning God's will can be very particular. For instance, if someone who is ill asks for your Christian help in healing, ideally you should know what particular plan God—who will ultimately heal all the redeemed—has for that person at that point in time, since getting it wrong could lead to confusion and disappointment.

A positive of the charismatic movement has been factoring in this sense of God's guidance in particulars. Biblically we may reflect on Paul who, headed to Asia on a general missional principle, had been diverted once by the spirit (Ac.16:6), then twice—from Bithynia (7)—then given a specific destination—Macedonia (9). How the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Jesus, diverted them, is not told. It may have been a general sense that the destinations didn't feel right—unease. Clarity came with a vision to one whom the team trusted, one who was open to obediently hearing the spirit.

"There are many dangers of self-deception here, but that does not absolve us from seeking to discover still more soberly and carefully what the will of the lord is" (Smail 162). Barry Chant, a pastor/teacher, once noted that though there is safety for ships in harbours, that is not what ships are for. Learning to voyage with the spirit is trial and error; they who have never made mistakes have never made anything. Our errors can either drive us deeper into the spirit, or further away. It's a bit like early budding into guy-girl love.

It goes back to our father's love, and the pattern his son created for us, a pattern of response to the father's love, obedience enabled by, and sensitive to, the spirit of the lord. An obedience which in a Gethsemane garden can cry Abba; which on a Golgothic cross can commend our spirits unto our father.

Obedience: self-centred to Christ-centred

Our father seeks to meet our needs. It can be rather different if we overly seek our own needs. C S Lewis spoke of seeking earth and losing it, but seeking heaven for heaven and getting earth thrown in for good measure. We gain more if our attitudinal aim is right.

Don't misunderstand. We should seek our own wellbeing: "Don't worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks for what you have" (ERV: Php.4:6). The danger is in being self-absorbed, focusing God's will around our individual life, rather than seeking his global will; treating him as our obedient servant to meet *our* needs—not that *he* has any needs, incidentally.

The problems are both that we miss the missional picture, the *missio dei*, and the mindset of Job—*Though he slay me, yet will I praise him.* Jesus met many physical needs, but only when the healed had become his Sinai disciples, had he met their spiritual need at a Sinai level. Only when the healed become his Christian disciples, has he met their spiritual need at a Christian level. Like Abraham, Yeshua spanned the old and the new, a crossover from Terah to Isaac.

Physical and emotional healings are not sprats to catch mackerels. How much more would he who gives us sprats, give us mackerels? Healing by God is by love, but love has a bigger picture. It seeks to encourage into eternal family, which is where the greatest healing is. John spoke not so much of miracles, but of sign-miracles, σημεια/ *sēmeia*, pointers to Jesus' person and mission, which is to say that all his Gospel miracles were signs, even if not stated to be so.

That Jesus' signs have had success, is clear enough from those days to our days. Take one example. When Simon first met him, he had not been invited into deep discipleship (Jhn.1:41), though he had been given the Baptist's witness that Yeshua was messiah. Perhaps only Philip had been called to follow Jesus (43). Simon was called to deep discipleship after Jesus performed a miracle (Lk.5:4-6). In our days, some throw out miracles but not the message. In those days, his message didn't win over Simon (3), but his miracle did (8). In those days, Paul preached the gospel fully, and threw in miracles (Rm.15:19).

In those days under Sinai and not a principle since then,[202] unlike the rabbis, Jesus chose who would be his core disciples, rather than them asking to travel with him, "and unlike rabbinic disciples, Jesus' followers were not called to follow the study of the law but to follow 'him'" (Stein 142). As with Simon, who was called when the time was right and not merely on John's witness, it is healthy when a sense of awe leads to a sense of personal insignificance, but to which Jesus immediately added significance (Lk.5:10).

Miraculous signs can disappoint. Take one example. Because their skin blemishes had triggered a symbol-based community exclusion, a multiethnic group were outcasts. They lived sandwiched between Samaria and Galilee, their respective communities, having put aside their mutual hostility (Lk.17:11). Jesus, transcending cultural and covenantal barriers, offered a healing which required them to act in faith. All ten did, returning to their respective communities for priestly permission for reinclusion. As they travelled in faith all were healed, but only one—the only Samaritan, the 'enemy', the scab—returned to Jewish Jesus to thank him (16). While impermissible to call him into Sinai-discipleship, that man was in the Jhn.1:12 camp, saved (19: σωζω/*sōzō*) and prepared to become a Christian disciple. Still, a failure rate of nine out of ten seems pretty sad (Smail 165).

I saw a woman with MS come into our AoG church in Huthwaite, Notts., get healed in a Melvin Banks' healing blitz, and never darken our doors again, though she lived in the area. After a week of Melvin, I myself stopped attending for a while to clear my system—but he got folk healed. But how the healed could ignore Christ, was for long a genuine puzzle for me. Smail witnessed far more genuine miracles without genuine conversions, an unhealthy emphasis on miracles. People satisfied with sprats instead of sprats and mackerels.

But why join the church because it healed you? Why join the NHS because it healed you? The NHS does not point beyond itself to a higher goal. The church does point beyond itself to a higher goal. A

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[202] The Gospels show many peripheral disciples who had chosen Jesus, from whom 12 were chosen as core followers for intense training (Lk.6:13), one of whom never made it to church (Jhn.6:70), leaving before Jhn.15:16.

misemphasis of "subordination of the action of God to the need of man, [constituting] the unacceptable face of the charismatic renewal, and it is becoming more and more evident on every side" (Smail 163). Should the charismatic movement offer an alternative NHS, or an alternative kingdom? Sign-miracles are not simply to wow and to bless, but in context to present the bigger offer—discipleship.

Conversion, not simply to Christianity, but to obedience to the father, is the name of the greater game and our greater good. Jesus did not say that we were to follow him to ditch all our woes, but that each of us were to take up their own cross, and follow him who carried his cross-piece to Golgotha and died in obedience. Spiritually, we really must embrace death in order to embrace life. That is because spiritually speaking, common life is cut-off from God as father.[203] So to be alive to God as father, we must die in some ways to the common life.

Each Christian should recognise that their life is towards God's lordship, not towards sin's lordship (Rm.6:11). Now, if Paul's Roman audience was dead-dead to sin, lacking any pull towards it, he could have saved his ink. Death has, in fact, a range of meaning—as has life, and not all Christians are alive-alive to God. Many have died-died to the mortal world, and are alive-alive to God with no more pull towards sin. That's heavenly. But generally, within the mortal world those alive to God are not dead-dead to the world, and those alive to the world are not dead-dead to God.

By the mercies of God, the truth of being dead to God should not be squeezed into a Calvinist mould, but be reformed into God's mould by the renewing of our minds. Calvinism would have it mean dead-dead, with totally no desire for God, totally depraved—in breadth if not in depth—thus only switching to him if he has selected (limited

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[203] On the day Adam ate the forbidden fruit—a test of obedience?—he died relationally (Gen.2:17). Death did not mean that he had no spiritual life, but it did mean that such spiritual life was cut-off from Yahweh. Though dead, he and his wife held spiritual hopes, grateful to Yahweh, to Elohim (4:1,25-6). Some suggest that each Adam 1 person is a child of God, howbeit separated as the prodigal. Well yes, but unlike the prodigal, all get born in the pigsty.

atonement) which ones he will pre-evangelise—that is, first give a *desire* to be saved—and then give the evangel to (irresistible grace).[204]

Being dead to God does not mean that Adam, having died the day he sinned, had no further desire for Yahweh-God, nor that none before Abraham, or before Jesus—both special routes to express such desire—lacked such desire: Abel was able; others too were willing (Gen.4:4,26). Jr.3 spoke of Israel as a prodigal child of Yahweh, as a wife divorced as if by death, a people having been cut-off but, though sadly wishing sin more, wishing to return to him. Yahweh was unable to take Israel back unless Israel chose to repent (12-3). Greek mythology pictures the shades of death futilely wishing to return to substance, to mortal life. Death is a relative term.

The unredeemed must die from the common adamic life to enter the father's life. The crucifixion was God doing. It now involves us doing and letting God do. The self-centred life once killed old Adam, but paradoxically the Christ-centred life now kills old Adam.

Let's think outside of the box. What if Jesus had, instead of facing the cross, simply lived on and on and on, and anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, gone "around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (NIV: Ac.10:38)? That would suit many people down to the ground, but it would never take them into Christian life, which is life with the father, because that life would have been aborted, not birthed. Lots of healing but no cross, no new life. In fact, he stopped individually doing good and healing, died, opened up the new creation, and empowers his disciples to go around doing good, healing, and inviting into his family in which family obedience and commitment follow naturally.

Having a choice, is it better for us simply to get what we can *before* the cross, or to go through it into his new life, plus the healing that flows *after* the cross as well? Healing plus life. As for the latter, Ac.1:1

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[204] Assuming that before the gospel, God saved people without the gospel, why then since the gospel, should he only save folk by the gospel? And if he preps total *sinners* to desire it, yet they die before conversion yet die saved, what has conversion added? Calvin's hamartiology/soteriology does not add up.

tells us that *before* the cross Jesus began (ηρξατο/*ērxato*) a programme, and *Acts* goes on to tell of the programme continuing *after*, through his disciples—as it still does. "Our renewal experiences and our spiritual gifts have significance only in so far as they are the sources or expressions of a new obedience to the father which proves that we really are children of him" (Smail 166).

Obedience, said Smail, might require us to be in a dull and dreary church which offers at best meagre spiritual or communal support. Did it not require Paul to spend time in dull and dreary jails, which offered him little spiritual or social support? Yet note the word *might*. It might be that we are better transferring to a solid lively and cheery church. Let us use prayer and our God-given wisdom.

If we have those two options, a question is, which is our father's will for us, assuming he has a preference?[205] And another question is, how willing are we to choose the duller *if* our father chooses it for us? This is conversion to obedience. Writing a Gethsemane letter from prison—one of his four prison letters—Paul said he was satisfied whether abased or abounding; whether filled or famished; in poverty or in plenitude (Ph.4:12). He glowed in the dark!

Sometimes obedience is as planting seed. That seed must die, must lie languishing, in order to bring forth fruit (Jhn.12:24). Sometimes such a death can come by opposing human society, speaking out for truth. Truth is not relative. It is not subjective. It is objective.

Said Éomer: "It is hard to be sure of anything among so many marvels. The world is all grown strange. Elf and dwarf in company walk in our daily fields; and folk speak with the Lady of the Wood and yet live; and the Sword comes back to war that was broken in the long ages ere the fathers of our fathers rode into the Mark! How shall a man judge what to do in such times?"

Replied Aragorn: "As he has ever judged. Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among elves and dwarves and another among men. It is a man's part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house." (Tolkien 3.2.427-8) Morally myopic legislators seek to substitute universal truth, for

[205] And he doesn't always. Which colour shoes does he wish me to wear today?

State *truth*, so tend to totalitarianism. Even in speaking about *God's truth*, we are simply talking about *objective* truth concerning God, not a *My truth, your truth*. Mere postmodernist concoctions. Our Christian insights are not *equally* in-valid, *equally*-rubbish, ideas (C S Lewis' *The Abolition of Man*), but are real *insight*, not religious *opinion*.

A postmodernist might write a book denying objective meaning to talk—anyone's but theirs—and will illogically defend their writing as objective truth, urging readers to read it *as it was meant*. We must seek to discern God's will in moral matters—for morality does matter—and in obedience as a holy nation under God, and with love for those who persecute us, proclaim it in wisdom and by the spirit.

And they who have yielded rightly to the father's will, will find it easier to yield to others when it is right to do so (Rm.12:18). Christian shepherds who yield rightly to the father, will find it easier to avoid squeezing their flock into their own hierarchical orb. What's been called, heavy shepherding, is perhaps only justifiable with heavy sheep. Our authority is relative to our submissiveness to God's authority, the principle of having authority under authority; being guides under guidance. To go beyond the cross, we must go through the cross, and there may be many such times in our Christian walk.

Grace: its initiative

"You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed" (CEB: Eph.2:8).[206]

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[206] Grammatically, the Greek for 'this' (τουτο/*touto*) is in the neuter gender, so not an obvious connection to faith (πιστις/*pistis*)—put in the feminine gender. The CEB simply clarifies for English readers. "The context demands that this be understood of salvation by grace as a whole, including the faith (or faithfulness) through which it is received" (O'Brien 175). Agreeing in part, I think O'Brien overreached into faith here, and I would not take Php.1:29—referenced—beyond the idea of being privileged by the evangel to receive and suffer, into being granted the actual faith-capability through the evangel to receive. We are granted the offer which has outcomes.

The question becomes, although the capacity to believe comes from God (a creation gift), are we nevertheless able to freely choose whether to exercise that capacity in choosing to accept or reject the gift of salvation?

John made it clear that spiritual love did not simply flow from us to God, but that the flow began by God, to which we respond (1Jhn.4:10). That often a guy or girl initiates romance, does not mean that the object of their interest does not *freely choose* to reciprocate, or that reciprocation is a love-gaining *work*. If Santa Claus pops a parcel into your stocking, is opening it up a *work*? I suspect that the term *ergon* (energy/work), is not fit for purpose, but let's look at it. As to initiative, we did not bring God's son down from heaven; the father sent him down for us. Grace is God's initiative, and is God's constant.

There is a position known as monergism. You could say, one worker. Basically the word, theologically, can mean either that it's all by God—Calvinism tends to this—or that it's all by us. Then there's a position known as synergism—Arminianism tends to this, though can be a lite monergism. You could say, two workers cooperating. This does not say in itself whether one of the two workers has initiated and does the main work, or whether the work of one is an exercise of receiving from the exercise of the other giving. Indeed, synergism might be implied by co-working with God in evangelism.

Some speak of a lite form of Arminianism as semi-Arminianism, which some scorn as simply a wolf dressed up as a lamb! I use the term Arminianism broadly for the general idea that humanity has a truly free ability to choose to allow God to work in certain settings. John Wesley held to Arminianism, opposing George Whitfield over it. The two evangelical sides are still not fully reconciled. NT Greek has a passive imperative, as in *the command* of Rm.12:2 *to allow* God to transform our minds. Obedience allows God to play his part.

To some extent, monergism can allow two workers, but cannot allow that both are fully independent, and prefers to say that man's response is not work, is not efficient. Indeed, as regards Christian salvation, Calvinistic strong monergism—or lite synergism—allows that the lesser party is dependent on the sovereign party even if unknown to itself. In short, that God is puppet master; that the puppets appearing to have independence is the art of illusion, hiding the strings; that puppet-choice appears to be freewill choice, but is simply based on the movement of the strings. Unchosen puppets unrescued will deservedly burn; chosen puppets rescued thank God.

Per Calvinism, eternally damned puppets are eternally damned by the puppet master's sovereign choice alone (Dual Election).[207] A caring firefighter runs into a burning prison. Not being omnipotent, they only rescue some of those who are all equally as evil. Do you defend the firefighter for saving some (none had merit), or damn them for not saving all (all had total demerit)? God is omnipotent. Theological attempts to justify such a seeming immoral choice to discriminate between the indiscriminatable, to lucky-dip rescue some and lucky-dip abandon others, tend to underline that grace is sovereign choice, and even choosing to save one and not a billion, is one more saved than humanity deserves. It has a certain logic and systematic appeal —given certain assumptions. It understands that God saved A though left B damned, but not why God chose A instead of choosing B, and assumes grace to be a lucky-dip. Some Calvinists even deny knowing if they are A or B, so Paul's words of marrying "in the lord" could be problematic at best if they don't know who's in the lord.

To some extent, Calvinism's dilemma is set up by first restricting ultimate salvation to hearing the gospel. Are all Chinese who died before the cross, and all Australian aboriginals of the century after, ultimately doomed because they never heard missionaries? No, it's not their jolly bad luck, it is God withholding hearing the gospel from sinners who truly deserve to die, says Calvinism: and who are we to question the sovereign's sovereign decision to sometimes give (grace) and sometimes withhold (damn)?

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[207] Let's consider Saul's conversion. If Dual Election is the paradigm, was his prior attack on the church as much by God's sovereignty as his conversion? Bear in mind that both Judas of Kerioth and Saul of Tarsus, were selected, chosen (εκλεγομαι/*eklegomai*: Jhn.6.70; Ac.9:15), for tasks, not for salvation.

In more Arminian thinking, Saul's earnestness for God—without Level 3 knowledge (Rm.10:2)—led him to persecute Christians—as does Islam. God saw his suitability of heart and head, and elected him for Christian function. And when the time was right (Rm.5:6), he called to him through messiah (Ac.9:3-6), to which he was already being drawn but was both wilfully and unreasonably, stubbornly resisting like a dumb ox kicking against directional goads (26:14). Given what we are, God can choose us for given tasks.

One ancient pagan, C3 Porphyry, believed that Christianity was ridiculous because he believed that it taught that ultimate salvation only came after the cross—maybe throw in a few exceptions—and then only to those who heard of it and accepted it.[208] If I believed it taught what he believed it taught, I reckon I'd join his camp, even as C S Lewis reckoned that siding with some Anglican vicars logically meant joining atheism—Lewis' point has become more pointed.

Well before Neal Punt, Porphyry asked, *What's Good about the Good News?*[209] Did the Christian god damn all generations before the cross? Even limited exceptions through Abraham's line and its limited interface with Gentiles couldn't justify that, could it? Why accept a parochial religion whose limited atonement merited scorn and defamed God?[210]

The Christian reply should begin with God not being a god, parochial or otherwise: a parochial god cannot be God—no *god* can; no god is *real*, and God is suprareal. Anyway, sadly Augustine, stuck within the exclusivist camp, attempted to rubbish Porphyry, saying that the unevangelised totally deserved damnation and God's unmerited goodness was shown by the fact that he was prepared to save even some: don't even the charitable limit their charities? Yes Augustine, but what if the charitable have limitless funds?

After a 'starmageddon' storm, a boy was mocked for returning handfuls of the surviving multiple thousands of starfish that had been beached, back to the sea. But he really believed that it made a difference to those he saved. So may God limit salvation any way he

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208 There is a similar issue with the idea that non-messianic ethnic Jewry is ultimately damned *except for* its last generation who will *all* be saved. Some moderate this idea by asserting that prior generations have had a different kind of salvation, a different salvation road, by virtue of their special ethnicity—will God DNA test?

209 Compare Punt's *What's Good About the Good News?* (1988), an inclusivist book reflecting F F Bruce's position: www.ukapologetics.net/evinc.htm.

210 Evangelist John Wesley agreed: a limited atonement to rule out a salvation offer, "makes your blood run cold" (Sanders 72).

has chosen, for even saving one from sin's storm shows more grace than humanity has deserved, said Augustine, echoed by John Calvin.

Contra post-mortem evangelism—as some wrongly said 1 Pt.3:19/4:6 taught[211]—Augustine refused "to entertain the thought that the gospel was once preached, or is even to this hour being preached, in hell…as if a Church had been established there as well as on earth" (Sanders 55). He and Aquinas held that the noncarnate son preached through Noah to Noah's generation.

Porphyrian argument still deafens some to Christianity. Arguably neither post-mortem evangelism, nor Augustine's be-thankful-for-limited-mercies approach, best shows biblical teaching on ultimate salvation. I hold that ultimate life has always been available to all peoples without evangelism; that evangelism is for Christianity.

Appalling some ears, Billy Graham said that even God couldn't make our decisions for us. I hope that Smail's heart, once deeply dyed in Scottish Calvinism, is no longer appalled. Unappalled I stand with Graham. It's just the final decision which God, having helped bring us to, cannot make for us.

Pace Smail's caricature, that is not to say that "God falls inactive and leaves it to us to save ourselves" (168). If I board an international flight, I do not fly myself, the aircraft flies me. If I offer you protection and you accept, you have not protected yourself, I have. If you choose otherwise, I will be unable to protect you. Theologically at most you can unprotect, unsave, yourself. You cannot protect, save, yourself.

Smail expressed grave concern that from its Methodist roots, Pentecostalism was committed to Arminianism—"the Pentecostal baby…immersed in the Arminian bathwater and lost without trace"—with the idea that spirit-baptism could be switched on by our working through certain steps. I think that pastorally he had a general fear of Arminianism infecting even ideas of *obtaining healing* by human steps—many had fallen by failed steps. I suggest that our steps take us to the door of healing, but God sovereignly

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211 I highly commend Jobes 2005, on this, though I would replace one or two terms in making her points. She affirms Dick France and well answers Don Carson and Edmund Clowney.

decides who to let through. If we do not go to the door, we do not, as a general rule, get healed. We must present ourselves. Likewise with conversion, with spirit-baptism, and with water-baptism.

Smail, following F D Bruner, was correct to fear that grace as God's initiative, can easily be lost in Pentecostal-charismatic circles, when steps are the focus. But the corrective is surely constant reminders that grace has called, and grace will consider, and grace will decide: "…present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (NIV: Php.4:6): peace, knowing he's heard. I will add that sometimes when the term grace is not used in Pentecostal circles, it is because the term spirit is used as implying the spirit of grace (Heb.10:29).[212] I admit the folly of thinking that he can be wrapped around our little fingers, summoned at our command, a candy machine paid by faith to give the goodies we desire (169).

Among such follies—some say new crazes come annually—have been the claims "that the freedom and wholeness we seek can be found in speaking in tongues, having our memories healed, praising God for everything, joining a charismatic community, and sharing our lives, or—most arrogant of all—by 'claiming' in faith whatever we need, whether it is a cure from cancer or the possession of a Cadillac" (Smail 169). Smail could see biblical value in such, so long as they were taken under grace as facets, not standalone fixes. Each has healed some and harmed some (170).

Such fixes can feel good yet leave us floundering, even exhausted. We need to have a clear calm theological pool to which to return in spiritual thirst, an unbreakable elastic thread which allows us freedom to explore, but which pulls us back to core freedom if we venture too far, a better thread than that which Ariadne gave to Theseus to return him from the Minotaur's labyrinth.

Though the father is gracious towards us, he cannot be forced. So some by a wrong route approach the right door and receive by grace

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212 "This is the sole instance in the New Testament where the spirit is called the spirit of grace, but here the writer's purpose was to sum up in a word or two the full benefits which the spirit has brought" (Guthrie 219).

what otherwise they would not. Leo Harris argued that Mk.1:40's answer went global at the messianic age; that we need not ask, *Are you willing to heal me?* for the *Yes* has been given. But did the clear Yes to that person, mean a Yes automatically to every person?

I suggest that rather than assuming the Yes, we follow the pattern of prayerful belief-request, allowing—oh impertinent word!—God to decide. But we need not follow the pattern of hiding our healing under a bushel (Mk.1:44), nor of affirming Sinai.[213] Though "the people who disobeyed Jesus' injunctions to silence only made his mission more difficult" (Carson 2010:476), the situational point was that Yeshua's mission was helped by a slow burn of public interest, and hindered by excessive flames. I guess he worked many miracles which were obediently kept silent by his request, blessings just for those needy.

Similar to misunderstanding Mk.1:41, so we can misunderstand Lk.11:13—Smail's focus example. If our father is willing to give, is it then up to us to take what then is ours? Or should our attitude be of asking, grateful that he might give to us—perhaps even believing on specific grounds that he will? Grace calls us to call on grace. We can see this pictured in C S Lewis', *The Silver Chair*, where Aslan (a christ figure) replies: "You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you" (1980:25). Response, not initiation.

Neither hard Arminianism, nor hard Calvinism, need apply. Some use the term like Calviminianism for a middle ground but, of course, some hate that as being neither hare nor hound, fish nor fowl. *Ephesians* neither shows Paul's Calvinism, nor Calvin's Paulinism, and Arminians afraid to go there, are simply too afraid.[214]

I happily accept Pauline authorship of this circular-epistle, and do not believe that it is to Arminianists what Is.53 is to Judaism. "Before

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213 Jesus' healing had limited value. It allowed the man to step up to the community door, guarded by ceremonial laws which allowed exemptions for the economically poor: Lv.14:21,32 "emphasizes the concern of the sacrificial texts for the poor, just as the later legal texts of Lv.17–26…reflect a similar value" (Hess 302). Before the messianic community began, this man had to obey Sinai to worship at that level.

214 On other grounds some scholars deny that Paul wrote *Ephesians*—I demur.

the world was made, God chose us in Christ, to be holy and blameless before himself in love. God predestined us for adoption as his inheriting children through Jesus Christ. This was according to his goodwill and plan, unto the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely bestowed on us in the beloved son" (Eph.1:4-6). It's funny, by the bye, how God chose some to be Arminians, and some elected to be Calvinists. I worship in a Calvinish church but carry no Calvinist card.

These few verses, out of context, can be coloured in in various theological ways, ways fashioned by a number of reflections and slowly forged. That is a legitimate process. But like two rain drops falling side by side can end up in different rivers heading in different directions to different oceans, so our metanarratives will colour our readings. Mine is that Paul affirmed deity's initiative in the whole process, since a coin has two sides and a gem has many facets and Paul's focus would naturally be at times on the deity side.

I happily affirm that whereas God's election of the Christian-saved, is beyond-time, it is based on the realities of time, such as our hearts towards him, our catchment area being an evangelistic area, and our openness to his son revealed. After all, to say that he chose us if the term *us* has no reality, is mere nonsense.

Can you love what is not? You can love an idea, such as unicorn, but at least the idea itself is real *as an idea*, howbeit in subreality, fantasy land, imagination. God chose me to become a Christian, but only because in time I have existed. God-beyond-time knows well the warp and woof of all that has existed and will exist. Paul's emphasis here was that we cannot force our ways into inheritance-childhood. It is by grace, God seeing beyond-time our willingness to his general and generous offer, and for his part choosing to grant us our wills.

He predestined us, not preforced us, beyond-time seeing our in-time acceptance of his offer of Christian life. Put a little simplistically: God chose us seemingly *before* we chose him, *because* we chose him *because* he chose us. It is from our time perspective that we can see that it's as if he has always destined us to become Christians, though he met us at the cross. If God chooses to be open to all, he has chosen all those who have chosen him.

Paul's words here do not bespeak the mechanism—whether of stringed puppets or stringless agents—by which we elect God's

election. Though Paul said that we were dead (νεκρος/*nekros*), that carries the basic picture that as Adam ate and died to God but still knew him, so we were conceived cut-off from God yet having a sense of, and at least some hidden desire for, deity (Eph.2:1-5).[215] It was like having a sense of hunger, and by grace finally invited to sit and eat (Rm.10:14). But we should see that the food exists by the father's grace, that he has made us capable of eating of the spiritual food, that he desires that we do so, and that he has put it on our plates.

It is right—to go back to Paul—to praise God's glorious grace, which he intends for us to enjoy, and to live holy and blameless before him in love, as he intends for our benefit, not for his. The gourmets might work through their grace-supper, but they do not work for it. But some still argue that stringfree freewill only plays its part once grace has through stringed freewill, given us Christian salvation.

Can our lack of faith disallow God's work? Jesus was limited as regards to miracles in his hometown of Nazareth, which even tried to kill him (Mk.6:4-6; Lk.4:29). Jesus marvelled, not that faith had been withheld by his father, but that faith had been withheld by the people. But then, perhaps not so much belief withheld, as wrong-belief—misbelief—given: they had a positive negative towards him, based on their community psychology. It wasn't merely lack. After all, he could work miracles without third-party faith.

As to revivals and renewals, sometimes they appear to come by God's sovereignty alone, and sometimes by the cry of thirsty people for rain. Yet perhaps behind the prayers for water is the hidden spirit stirring up the thirst—pre-evangelism. "The gracious will of the father is the sole originating source of all our blessings, and all renewal and its outworkings stem from that" (Smail 173). Certainly for our sakes, the father can quicken us to seek what he would have us find. When revivals, renewals, and Christians, sink into their own mechanisms, they do indeed sink.

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215 Paul urged Christians to account themselves as dead, necrotic to sin (Rm.6:11), but often wrote knowing full well that cut-off by Christ they still had an inner itch to sin. This inner itch works both ways.

Chapter 11

Our Father's Supremacy

True worship is worshipping the father in spirit and revelation/ reality (αληθεια/*alētheia*: Jhn.4:23). Smail noted that often references to God the father in Paul and the synoptics, were in the context of prayer and worship (175), as was the Abba word. I recall a good talk on how Davidic kingship prophesied Christ's kingship, but it missed his upline connection! If Jesus is king of monarchs, his father is the king of the king of human monarchs. Yahweh was king of the Davidides; Jesus' disciples were to pray to the father that the *father's* kingdom come (Mt.6:10), not that Jesus' kingdom come.

Our father; my father

Some look for an original version of the Paternoster. Joachim Jeremias (Lutheran) argued that *Luke* is nearer to it and that *Matthew* is expansion. If we assume neither to be original, should we seek to reconstruct the assumed original? As said in ch.9, *contra* Smail there is no good reason not to assume that Jesus taught this basic structure a number of times, with Luke and Matthew having chosen their versions rather than redacted a Quelle. Unlike mathematics, there is no exact answer to the set question.

A few extra points. Luke's account was expanded by scribes to fit *Matthew* more closely, hence most reliable Bible versions pare back from these early additions to *Luke* to say what Luke said—no more no less. A doxology (For yours in the kingdom…) was added later to Matthew's account (6:13b), was not cross-pollinated to Luke's, and migrated into the English tradition via Coverdale. Possibly Lk.11:2 was taught in Aramaic, beginning with Abba, but were the disciples introduced by Jesus to Jesus' familial relationship *before* becoming messianic children of the father? Notice too that though it is often called the lord's prayer, Jesus didn't pray it, but he taught it, and it taught a focus first on God our father, second on our needs.

Our father in church and closet

For Mt.6:9-13, whether Jesus used the Greek πατηρ ἡμων, or the Aramaic *'abînû*, and whether he tweaked the Kaddish—twin sister?—note that this shows corporate prayer, later taken up as a church prayer. Before the church, it was public domain for Jesus' disciples—many wished to know what his prayer focus was (Lk.11:1).

Did the term *father* go any further than would fit into intertestamental Jewish religion, that soil from which Judaism sprung in AD 70? Initially, each segment of this prayer would carry a pre-Christian weight in pre-Christian terms. Later each segment would carry a Christian insight in the light of the cross. Church liturgy has some justification and benefit, but it is good to note that rather than offering a standardised liturgical form, the lord said that it was how, not what, they were to pray (οὑτος/*houtos*)—a pattern allowing variation howbeit soon liturgicalised by the early church.

It is unclear whether the paternoster was translated into Greek, and if so whether from a Hebrew or an Aramaic form: few ethnic Jews knew Hebrew; few Anglophiles know Latin. What is clear is that Luke's version fits a more private, individualised, slot. It is more *My father*, than *Our father*, more for the Prayer Closet, prayer aloneness, personal and warm.

Our father; not the world's

Because of the familial covenantal term *father*, "the early church was right to forbid non-Christians from reciting this prayer as vigorously as they forbade them from joining with believers at the Lord's Table" (Carson 2010:416). Smail concurred, castigating its use in such as school assemblies (177). It was taught under Level 2. It was taught under Level 3. May it be taught under Level 1—common humanity?

But Abba prayer is not, I think, about Level 1—common humanity—fatherhood. It began in a Level 2, Sinai Covenant, setting. Discounting the gate of covenant is, dare I say, like teaching our school assemblies that human sexual intercourse is willy-nilly, not morally permissible only through the gate of marriage. Spiritual illiteracy, alas, now requires that we spell out that God alone defined what marriage actually is, a heterosexual covenant: redefinition is fanciful. For my part I wish all marriages to be gay and cheerful.

Speaking of joy, the paternoster "was among the ultimate privileges allowed only to those who were in Christ. It took *parrhēsia*, Holy Spirit boldness, to dare to say Our Father", said Smail, who brought in John Chrysostom at this point (Smail 177). I like that Chrysostom spoke of joy and sobriety in the praying, but like not that he, apparently, spoke of a heavenly god—God is God, and he is not a type. I recall my own fear of presumption in first turning from the lord, to God the father to ask—dared by a Leo, I was as timid as a mouse.

Holy addressee

Where *name* (ονομα/*onoma*) represented the person, it was essential that God's name as our heavenly father be honoured, that is, treated as holy, hallowed. Prior to the cross, this would suggest Yahweh as father to Sinai-Israel. Post the cross, this would suggest Yahweh as father to the church, and individualised to each individual within the messianic community—sensus plenior.

It is dishonour when people of the darkness spew out blasphemies against God the father. It is dishonour when people of the light treat God as "an indulgent heavenly Daddy whose main function is to gratify their wishes. [Nor is] his authority…to be invoked to endorse all our insights and silence our opponents. Within renewal circles there is a pious taking of God's name in vain by people who give the impression that the heavenly father is so busy giving them infallible messages about every detail of their lives, that you are left wondering how he can have any time left to run the universe! Their conversation is so peppered with 'God said' and 'God told me' that the whole thing degenerates into little more than charismatic garrulity, a form of words without much meaning, especially when the content of the alleged divine communication is so often entirely banal" (Smail 179).[216]

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216 Smail's jest about God having time to run the universe, raises an interesting aside. Of course, God runs the universe primarily by his laws of nature, such as gravity. And as to time to hear each request, C S Lewis illustrated by an author's time being outside of their characters' times. A character can ask a question. The author can spend weeks before replying, which in the book is

To honour his name is to rejoice in him as our heavenly father. Paul's greetings and valedictions often linked to a word of praise:[217] "Praise God the father of our lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful father and the source of all comfort" (NLT: 2 Cor.1:3); "God, the father of our lord Jesus, who is worthy of eternal praise, knows I am not lying" (NLT: 2 Cor.11:31); "praise God the father of our lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ" (Eph.1:3). Where the lord is our brother and God is our father, there is a priority of praise. Worship, like praise, comes in various formats. Our Whole Offering should be of our whole being, 24/7, in the attitudes and actions of obedient life (Rm.12:1-2). But there is verbal worship, whether expressed in speech or in song (Eph.5:19-20). Awe and praise unite in the father.

Holy kingdom

Prior to the cross, *holy kingdom* would suggest Yahweh's messianic plan, which in fact came speedily and soon through the cross. Post the cross, this would suggest Yahweh's eschatological plan, which will come with messiah's return (Heb.9:28). Matthew's account expands the prayer for the father's kingdom, his reign, into its outworking as his will uniting heaven and earth. "We could say that the church is poised between the 'appearing' of the grace of God at the first coming of Christ and the 'appearing' of the glory of God at the second, and it is these two events that mark the start and end of the 'present age'" (Kay & Moxon 227), an eschatological sandwich, so to speak. When we speak of the inaugurated kingdom, we mean that reign which began by the cross, which continues to grow, and will flower when Jesus returns. It is our father's will which as a moral imperative, we ought to seek.

If our father's part is sovereign grace, ours is "to put ourselves at his disposal so that he may work his kingdom in us, among us and through us" (Smail 180). We ought to yield ourselves in consecrated obedience

given to the asker seconds after they asked. God has eternity beyond time for each reply raised on the timeline. Even AI can handle in real time, millions of questions at once.

217 In such contexts, ευλογητος/*eulogētos* should not be *blessed* (Heb.7:7).

to him as family, as we yielded in conversion to become family. That his true kingdom has come (Sinai was an imperfect shadow) gives us an exclusive confidence. Its daily filter-through, gives us distinctive expectation. Its commitment to fully come, give us a unique hope.

Holy bread

Prior to the cross, *holy bread* could suggest Yahweh's this-world blessings to his children's bodies. Post the cross, this could suggest Yahweh's daily blessings to his children's spirits. The unique word επιουσιος/*epiousios* (Mt.6:11//Lk.11:3), seems to offer the idea of being given today what will be needed the coming day, reducing anxiety: *What will tomorrow bring?* In its setting, it perhaps covers the full range of physical needs of folk who lived hand to mouth: their today's pay was their today's food. It focused on their needs, not their greeds. Ask God each day to supply for the next.[218] It does not discount the general need to work for supplies, so could include general health and opportunity.

While it can be so applied to our bodily needs, by spiritual extension in faith we can also dwell on Jesus himself as the bread of life, the manna from heaven given to us. Our father's care for us can be seen in his basic help in our bodily needs, and in our deeper, our spiritual, needs. But rather than look to future bread, such as the messianic banquet, we still ask today for tomorrow's needs—a little in hand.

Holy pardon

Prior to the cross, *holy pardon* could suggest Yahweh's pardon via the temple's sacrificial system, pardon within Sinai. Post the cross, this could suggest Yahweh's daily putting away of family friction.

Having asked as children for bread, what about pardon as children? As has been said, Smail had suffered from "a sin-soaked guilt-ridden evangelicalism where there had been a great deal of talk about the cost of our atonement in the blood of Christ, and very little upon the free and loving grace of the father who in his intense desire for the

[218] The Voice Bible, and the Amplified Bible Classical, offer this reading.

homecoming of sinners, gave his son" (138). I would agree save for the 'homecoming' idea. Heaven was never our home, preconversion.

This prayer pattern taught by "Jesus lends no countenance to a guilt-ridden religion[219] that is obsessed with its sins and unworthiness. It is when we have praised the father, exposed ourselves to the call and grace of his kingdom, set ourselves within the generosity of his provision for us, that we can and must see the wrongness of our present response to him, and have recourse to his cleansing and forgiveness" (Smail 182). This request has raised many questions.

Ethnic Jews (Matthew's aim) thought more perhaps about sins as debts,[220] unlike Gentiles (Luke's aim), so wording varied. But ethnic Jews tended to use the idea of debt as something incurred by sin: the debt of sin must be paid for. This second request is linked to the first by an *and* (και/*kai*), as is the third request.

Matthew's account is based on us having forgiven, and Luke's is based on us forgiving. But it is not that our acts of forgiveness oblige our father's forgiveness, a You first, I'll follow. No, but our attitude of forgiveness opens our door to his forgiveness. Nor is this *evangelistic* forgiveness, conversion, the welcome into his family, let alone ultimate welcome. Rather, it is family forgiveness, with the idea that if we wish to forgive family members who sin against us, our mutual father is able to fellowship with us who have sinned against him. It is attaining and maintaining a good family attitude and activity in mortal life: "Walk happily and forgivingly with us, as we would walk happily and forgivingly with others." Amen.

Holy deliverance

Prior to the cross, *holy deliverance* could suggest human weakness even as God's Sinai people, though not based on Jesus' trials. Post the cross, this could suggest Yahweh's daily help in staying within our tolerances, and remind us of our weaknesses compared to Jesus.

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219 Our religion is Christianity. Only parts of it obsess on Christians as sinners.

220 Οφειλημα/*Opheilēma* is used only twice in the NT. Linguistically we could as well say that Mt.6:12 means *debt* and Rm.4:4 means *sin*, as that Mt.6:12 means *sin* and Rm.4:4 means *debt* (Carson 2010:421).

Does πειρασμος/*peirasmos* mean inner temptation, outward trial, or even an age-ending tribulation? If we take the word to mean temptation in Jas.1:13, it seems unlikely to mean such in Mt.6:13. What of trials? Would our father lead us into trials, if bad, unless we ask him not to? And are not trials, potentially good (Jas.1:2)?[221]

What *peirasmos* means in different contexts is important, and in Mt.6:13 it possibly surrounds temptation and test in a confession of weakness: thus the idea that we verbalise our humble wish not to be tried too deeply, not because unless asked, God might over test us, but because we need self-reminders of our weakness, even though we know that appropriate testing can have a positive value.[222] As to staying out of trouble, we again should look to God, and again neither discount nor depend on our own ability to withstand testing.

Luke prefaced his account to a longer address on prayer, which culminated "in an invitation to pray for the Holy Spirit which the father is willing to give to those who ask him" (Smail 183). Picking up on Luke's reference to the spirit, let us think again of the trinity and prayer. In a Christian setting, it is to the person of the father, through the

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221 Jesus was tested to the breaking point, and did not break, but the ultimate leader/driver was not the ultimate tempter. In fact, "the spirit did not tempt Jesus, but he did lead him to be tempted", according to Daniel Wallace.

https://danielbwallace.com/2017/12/12/pope-francis-the-lords-prayer-and-bible-translation. But can temptation and test meet? Can Satan tempt to weaken awry, what God tests to strengthen? Presuming that the disciples knew about Jesus in the wilderness, his pattern prayer for them could carry the idea that such ultimate tempting was something to seek to avoid, God willing—Please do not lead us in the way you led your son, into [such?] temptation, but on the contrary [when tempted?] deliver us from the evil one. A confession of our weakness and God's ultimate strength.

222 A few English versions break away from the traditional wording, though end-age (eschatological) talk of *the* trial is too limiting: NABRE/NRSV. The CJB/GNB probably pitch it about right—please don't test us too hard. God can *test* (*peirasmos*/*peirazō*) us through trying times (*dokimos*)—for which we should be grateful (Jas.1:12)—but he does not *tempt* us (*peirasmos*/*peirazō*: 13). So knowing that trials can make or break us, in prayer we remind ourselves that in weakness we fear to face where he might lead. See 1 Cor.10:13-4.

pattern of Christ's prayer, and by the power of the spirit: "…because of Christ, all of us can come to the father by the same spirit" (CEV: Eph.2:18).

Requests to the father

When Josef Andreas Jungmann (Jesuit) looked back into church history, he noticed that until the C4, the official rule of thumb—unlike private devotions—was very much to ask of God the father through Christ the high priest, "in such a way that the scheme that came down from the apostles was organically developed" (Jungmann 164). But before the C5 some had started to allow corporately asking Christ the lord directly.

Here I side with the earlier corporate understanding—organic development sometimes becomes weedy. Remember, many types of prayer—other than petition/entreaty—should be to the father, to the son, and also to the spirit. For instance, worship, adoration, thanks, praise, and chat, is justified to the lord. I would basically encourage vastly much more trinitarian prayer, vastly less entreaties to the lord, and no requests to the spirit. "The son and the spirit are themselves from the father and [point to] the father, so that in prayer the goal of the work of son and spirit is to introduce us to the father and to establish us in fellowship with him" (Smail 185). To the extent that we miss the goal of our father, the son and the spirit have failed.

Yet many of us have missed that goal, or been slow to gain it. "There is a Jesuology that can lavish an all too human love on an all too human Jesus, and banish God to such remote transcendence, that we are back with the idea that we have to cling to a loving Jesus to keep us right with a remote and probably angry god.[223] There is equally a prayer that concentrates on the spirit and the gifts and blessings he can bestow, in a way that forgets that these things matter only when we use them to witness to the son and to serve the father in a more effective obedience" (Smail 185).

The revelation, but excepting *maranatha*, is that we ask only the father, doubting him not and knowing him more. Requests not to

[223] A small g, as *god*, helps shatter the illusion that god-typing isn't polytheism.

Jesus but through Jesus; not to the spirit but in/by the spirit. Smail added the delightful witness that he himself had recently gained this goal, and in so doing had come into affectionate fellowship with his heavenly father, a confidence in the father learnt from confidence in Yeshua—from the son to the father, as the son reveals his father. He meant that it's a case of sorting out our fellowship with our heavenly father, through sorting out our doctrine.

I myself had some of this sorted out before reading Smail after my Bible college years. His book resonated, affirmed, and increased, my appreciation of such things. Since reading, I have plotted my own course, yet over the years seeds sown have germinated, which only rereading his book now suggests to me from whence came those seeds—we are not so independent as we sometimes like to think.

To the extent that we do not forget the father, our father, we can walk this life with biblical insight into life, with a sense of a loving heavenly family. When Yeshua peered beyond the cross, he said to his closest disciples: "On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the father for you. For the father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God. I came from the father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the father" (NABRE: Jhn.16:26-8). It must have blown their minds. Yet this is an understanding for all of messiah's siblings.

David Allen, referring to C18/9 Edward Irving's orthodoxy, said that Irving's controversial Christology "did not, however, lead him into 'Jesusism'[224]—that rather sentimental attachment to Christ sometimes found in charismatic circles that leads to a tendency to neglect other members of the trinity" (Allen 102).[225] I think Allen was right about contrasting the Charismatic Irving, to today's Charismatics. Some,

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224 Jesusism began as a protest to Paulinism's so-called complicating of Jesus, and has appeal to sub-trinitarianism, whether Christian, theistic, or atheistic. Our Jesuology must be biblically balanced, taking in the full NT revelation.

225 Strictly speaking, Christ is not a member of the trinity at all, but a *mode* of a member of the trinity, namely God the son as a human being. It's a bit like calling Jacob a Jew.

in sentimental attachment to Jesus, thoughtlessly overlook both father and spirit, and so are missing out on life. Audibly misshaping God's name to *the LORD*, then visually misshaping God's name into *the lord*, can lead to crucifying the trinity, so to speak. Jesusism dishonours God.

Requests through the son

Some speak of inclusive and exclusive mediations, in the sense that an exclusive can exclude our participation. The cross is an example. It was a prayer we haven't made, yet made for us. The former mediation includes our participation. It is our prayers channelled by Christ and aligned to the patrifocal requests of Jhn.16:26.

The basis for such petitionary prayer is being in his messianic family. This also picks up on expressions such as *In Jesus' name*, which pan out basically as requests as siblings within his mission, seeking to gain what Christ would gain in our setting, missional aims prayed with the voice of Christ (1 Jhn.5:14), which in itself requires walking as he walked in tune with the spirit. And within family we have leeway to also ask for non-missional desires (Php.4:6). Asking is because of Christ, through Christ, and with Christ our priest (Smail 187), us identifying with him; him identifying with us.

Subservient to the priest, we are priests. As Hans Küng said, it "is important that the positive significance of the priesthood of all believers be realized…. [Every Christian is able to have] direct access to God, [make] spiritual sacrifices…in a spirit of love and self-giving…preach the word and administer [water] baptism, the Lord's Supper and the forgiveness of sins [having come into] the mediating work of the one and only mediator" (Küng 372,381). Interestingly, Küng rebuked Protestants generally for rightly preaching the priesthood of all believers, but wrongly not practicing what they preached.

If we ask someone to ask God to heal us, primarily we should see it not as seeking healing through them, but as them helping us to lift up our faith to receive from our father, through Christ (Smail 187). That said, surely the gift comes in some sense through them, even as Jesus our pattern perceived power having flowed from him (εξ

αυτου/*ex autou*) to some woman (Mk.5:30).[226] If asking another to ask God instead of us asking him, we miss the point that even Jesus was not going to ask on his disciples' behalf instead of them! But asking another to pray alongside us can be inviting a faith-partner to help us pray directly to the father, family building itself up in love.

Requests in/by the spirit

In Eph.6:18, praying in the spirit (εν πνευματι/*en pneumati*) does not mean but can include, both glossolalia (Ernst Käsemann)[227] and deep emotion. We can be meaningfully commanded to pray with/in glossolalia, but not as to types of glossolalic prayer. It may be less fashionable to speak about praying *in the flesh*—in contradistinction to praying in the spirit's flow—but however worded the distinction is valid. Nor is the goal simply spiritual praying, but spiritually praying sensitive to and guided by the spirit. Still at times prayer can needfully go beyond in various ways, our minds being bypassed.

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226 The Greek phrase (v32) is in the feminine: he looked for *the woman* who had touched him (Stein 425). I think Christ sensed his father's power having flowed through him as the woman treated his robes as an access point, a faith-point. Similarly, a word of knowledge can tell us that God has worked through what we've said or done, to help someone. By faith she knew God had healed her through Jesus, who then assured her it was permanent (34).

'Daughter' was an affectionate rabbinic address to women of whatever age and whatever genetic relationship. Christian women who deem themselves brides of Christ, perhaps don't count themselves his daughters, but still miss the point—they are *sisters* of his; *daughters* of the father; *part* of the bride.

227 "The spirit himself has to intervene if our prayers are to have a content which is pleasing to God. He does so in such a way that even in worship he brings us to that groaning of which the unredeemed creation is full and which speaks out of the longing of the assaulted for the redemption of the body. In tongues at worship there sounds forth in a singular way, and in such a manner that we do not ourselves comprehend the concern of the spirit who drives us to prayer, the cry for eschatological freedom in which Christians represent the whole of afflicted creation. In this the spirit manifests himself as the intercessor of the community before God and he takes it up into his intercession" (Käsemann 241).

I have mentioned the Five Paraclete Sayings, viz Jhn.14:16-7,26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 12-5. The setting was of the spirit taking over the paraclete job, though in new ways for a new situation (14:16). We have a new mission, and the new paraclete is our helper, howbeit our master not our servant. His is our tactical lord. Our praying should be within him; him within us. A perichoresis relationship, as water in a sponge, and the sponge in the water.[228]

- In the father: 1 Ths.1:1; 1 Jhn.3:24[229]
- The father in: Jhn.14:23; 1 Jhn.3:24
- In the son: Jhn.6:56; Gal.2:20
- The son in: Jhn.6:56; Gal.4:19[230]
- In the spirit: Rm.8:9;[231] Rm.14:17
- The spirit in: Jhn.7:38-9; 1 Cor.6:19

When praying in the spirit, are we included in Christ's intercession to his father for creation? Let us let loose the spirit within as we pray.

228 In context, it can suggest dwelling together, as in sharing a tent, an identity, a union. That is the standard idea of mutual indwelling, which sometimes carries on the spiritual level a mystical, sometimes a non-mystical, meaning of intertwining. As I clasp my hands, the fingers of my left hand intertwine with the fingers of my right hand. That I can dwell in Jerusalem says something; that Jerusalem can dwell in me says something more.

229 This speaks of a mutuality of indwelling.

230 An interesting text: Christ (his nature) being formed within Christians, christification.

231 The contrast obviously does not mean anyone physically dwelling in the spirit and no longer in their own physical body! It's spiritual dwelling, connection.

Chapter 12

Our Father's World

Hope of the church

A big point in *Ecclesiastes* is that ultimately all secular building—but not all choices—within the human sphere is vain, profitless (1:2; 12:8). And the script points to seeking the permanent beyond the temporary (Heb.13:14)! "If everything is profitless, what then is the point of living? The pessimism is only apparent. A proper understanding… will show that it is not pessimistic at all. As we shall see, what it means is that everything we gain in this [temporary] world will ultimately be profitless because we have to die and, when we die, we have to leave everything behind. This is simply realism and not pessimism." (Leong 17)

Yet there is righteous enjoyment here and now, as well as grief. This universe, and this world, is God the creator's. In Ethnic Israel, the land of Canaan was given to God's Sinai people, not as freehold, but as leasehold: they were tenants, as the Canaanites had been before them. This world is ours, in the sense that in Adam we are its rightful tenants under God. Perhaps at the Lamb's Wedding Feast leasehold will for us become freehold for the whole universe (Rv.19:9). But for now, I am saying that ultimately all that we have and are is God's—the boastful My Body brigade is in fundamental error.

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Lizzy is distressed by "a family so deranged: a father absent, a mother incapable of exertion" (227). I don't know whether we should picture Earth as our mother, but certainly to the extent that our father is absent, we the children are deranged. Instead of being squeezed into the spirit of this age (αιων/ *aiōn*), whether by mass media and/or by State School conditioning, we are commanded to let the spirit of our father transform us into his likeness in Christ (Rm.12:2): christification. How can we otherwise rejoice and weep aright?

Seeing the world as his, we can better appreciate that he has plans to bless it. If it comes down to whether Rm.8:19-22 or 2 Pt.3:10-3 is

metaphorical, I'd say that Rm.8 seems to me much less able to bear that designation, than 2 Pt.3.[232] In short, if creation—pictured as sentient—is to hope for Christ's return, it's unlikely to hope for its incineration, but it is likely to hope—as Christians should—for the incineration of evil, in poetical terms the baseline being stripped from all derangement from circles both high and low. This removal of sinful rebellion is featured strongly in *Revelation*: *You are worthy, O God our lord, to receive our glory and honour and power* (Rv.4:11).

It is the hope of life, not the hope of death. But as *Revelation* shows, insight comes through the father's son, pictured as an apocalyptic lamb, having been slain, but now very much a warrior (Rv.5). Neither the universe nor our planet nor our common humanity, reveals the future God has planned for it and for us. The hope, the elpis, the "final dénouement", is fixed in God's will (Smail 193), and comes through his son and by the spirit.

There is a theme of completion in 1 Cor.15:24, when God's child—and through him God's children—has no more fighting to do. It is in the defeat of death, when the glorious return (παρουσια/*parousia*) of Christ comes, that our physical resurrection will happen, when, by our spirits released, we shall summon atoms to clothe us in immortal splendour, in celebration of his cosmic victory begun at the cross (Eph.1:22; 1 Pt.3:22).[233] Thus we shall be like God's son incarnate. I confess that in my younger days, walking through graveyards I feared that graves might literally open, and revived and

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232 Similar to Peter speaking poetically of the messianic age to be ended by messiah, so on Mt.5:18 Carson noted that the expression, "until heaven and earth disappear", simply meant "until the end of the age" (2010:367). Not exactly *never*, and not exactly literal. During the Sinaitic age Jesus fully upheld even the minutiae of the Sinai Covenant, and far from accusations that he came as an enemy to scrap it, he affirmed that while its mission lasted, it could not even be changed. He affirmed that he had come as a friend to fulfil its prophecy of a messianic age, and thereby to retire it from mission.

233 It does not exclude the idea of universal conquest after his global return, but it does not teach that idea.

reformed bodies suddenly bob out, if the trumpet sounded. I did not walk on graves. Silly, but there *is* to be physical reclothing.

Christ is neither docetic nor gnostic. The εσχατος αδαμ/*eschatos adam* (1Cor.15:45) loves physical nature, and the carnate is his natural element. At death he did not dissolve his physicality in favour of psychical existence. No, he rose physically from death, howbeit transforming physicality from mortal to immortal, thus glorifying nature. And his new humanity, "the firstfruit and promise of ours, is not insubstantial vision or shapeless ectoplasm, it is σωμα πνευματικον/*sōma pneumatikon*, physical body with the structure the creator gave" (Smail 194).[234] His fulfilment plans for us are similar. Let us who have this from the father, spread this hope to our hopeless world.

Light of the church

To the extent that the church is of the world, the world might neither bother to hinder nor to heed, and the church is safe but useless. To the extent that the church is of Christ, it is challenging light to the world (Is.49:6; Ac.13:47). Hence the warning that as messiah was illtreated, so we might be: indeed in the original setting there was often little doubt about it (Jhn.15:20-1).

And that is because the world of man, the κοσμος/*kosmos*, is in rebellion under rebellious spiritual forces below humanity. At the cross, did messiah defeat these non-human spirits, as Col.2:15 might suggest? "…having disarmed the powers and authorities, [God] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (NIV).

N T Wright (116) suggested that αρχας/*archas* and εξουσιας/*exousias* were *human* powers and authorities, not evil in themselves and perhaps representing Rome and Jerusalem, which exemplified government and religion at their then best but kosmic. They united to strip Jesus down to rebel-slave status, to hold him up to public contempt, and to celebrate a triumph procession over him. Had Paul in mind God's last laugh, *them* stripped down to size as rebels of sin

234 Hakes 2020 covers the misguiding of sadly stifling Spiritualism, sometimes the darling of TV companies.

and slaves to sin, *them* being ridiculed by the cross, Christ's victory triumph procession of *their* disempowerment?

Smail suggested that these referred to "religious (denominations and hierarchies), intellectual (-ologies and -isms), moral (codes and customs) and political (the ruler, the market, the school, the courts, race and nation) structures that dominate and condition our lives in the world" (195). He argued that such, though created by God (Col.1:16), rule over a fallen world (Eph.2:2), and treat it in dark servitude (Col.2:20; Gal.4:3), separating us from God's love in Christ. A bit like a fun cartoon I saw once—where a senator said he favoured organised crime because he disfavoured disorganisation—God still uses fallen controls (Rm.13:1), even though such substandard controls crucified the lord of glory (1 Cor.2:6-8). Yet Christ reigns above.

I like Wright's irony, but I think στοιχεια/*stoicheia* (Col.2:8,20) is "an equivalent to the Pauline expression, αρχαι και εξουσιαι, 'principalities and powers.' Martin suggests the translation 'demonic powers.'" (Arnold 477). The NLT scores well here. This idea is that Paul had directly in mind the demonic, using a random and variable phrase to picture the whole canopy of evil, the evil cloud above, which conspired to have messiah crushed in defeat. This idea would be but a layer above the human, co-shaping fallen humanity *apropos* religious and civil institutions. Above all such, the victory of Christ over them is something we as Christians and together as churches, must cash in on, in helping to redeem the kosmos through light. God so loved the kosmos that he gave his one-of-a-kind son (Jhn.3:16). Let us who see the father's light, shine his light redemptively to the blind.

Voice of the church

For an easy yet meaningful picture, let us speak here of vertical and horizontal horizons, perspectives. Secular Churchians and even secular Christians, seldom have the vertical, and exclusively or mainly operate from the world's mould, which is a sad and sorry old mould. Charismatic Christians especially should know and be better, since they prioritise their vertical horizon, and should hear for themselves and should be for others God's prophetic voice. As they are in God's light vertically, they should shine his light

horizontally. It is a spiritually practical role, when being heavenly minded becomes earthly good.

"When the Church in the joy of its praise, in the reality of its love, in the respect for the gifts and ministries of its members, overcomes the distinctions between rich and poor, middle class and working class, educated and uneducated, black and white, it will become a relevant sign of the new creation, and will have a word of prophecy to speak that is not banal or trivial but that has power to speak to the world because it is spoken about a way of life which is itself prophetic" (Smail 196).

Seeing the demonic in the spiritual, should not exclude anyone from seeing the demonic in the social sphere. And seeing, we should seek to bring Christ's victory into these situations, and not simply wait passively for the Eschaton to do the trick. Though on earth, things will never be perfect in this age. It is but as the stem of a plant; the flower will blossom only when messiah returns.

Still, that stem is a credible sign and a prophecy of the kingdom. Kingdom-now matters. We are to give prophetic voice to what the father is saying. Our prophesying should include our spirit-transformed lives, as well as our proclamation of Holy Writ, and of foci which the spirit would proclaim through us. In our worship of the father in spirit and reality, and our petitions to him, we proclaim him and focus on him. Some "liturgical tyrannies" will yield to liturgies "plastic to the spirit" (Smail 197); meaningless to meaningful.

We can be caught up in negatives, even if good negatives. Allowing the father to restructure our lives in Christ by the spirit, will introduce and increase positive ways in which to enjoy married and family life, to enjoy the Christian community and help others both inside and outside it, and to live lives in wise personal finances and to abound in the grace of giving (2 Cor.8:7). And much more.

It will also offer us true ecumenicism, not downplaying doctrine but looking beyond the fences of denominational division to at least see fellow Christians in other fields, all belonging to the one flock of Christ. On this I recall my office-boy days, when delivering business letters to a less populated area, I trailed an elderly asthmatic lady in Hull, who unaware of any nearby, between difficult intakes was praying "Jesus, Mary, Jesus, Mary". It hit me that though discounting the Mary bit, I agreed with her on the Jesus bit—all one in Christ.

Can it be that principalities and powers hold us back from the truly Christian life and vision? Is our vision too limited, too insular? Are we a prophetic voice to our world? Have we a personal renewal which fails to press forward into the local prophetical? And it is not simply evangelism *into* Christianity. It is social good news (evangelism) as well, into the social issues of our days, as court prophets speaking into the politics of our days without conforming into politics. The moral rectitude of the early Christians led to some being thrown into the Roman arenas since, put simply, they showed up the moral perversions of the Roman Empire—what's new?

Let us who hear the father's voice, speak his voice prophetically to our deaf world.

The ultimate father

Paul used a wordplay to say that from God the father (πατηρ/*patēr*), every father-unit (πατρια/*patria*) in heaven and on earth derives its true name, its *structure*: Eph.3:14-5. And that's irrespective of how true or untrue to God they happen to be. It can be taken as fallen and unfallen angelic structures—in heaven—as well as good and bad human structures—on earth (O'Brien 256). It might as such also show that only in conformity to the father, do derivative structures truly show true familiness.

Paul knelt before his father, praying for renewal to flow from the father through the spirit to those in Christ. Perhaps Paul also wished to remind his audience that though there were evil power structures, still they were derivative and not absolute powers. Paul prayed that Christ, already indwelling his audience, would settle down permanently in them (Eph.3:17).[235] As *in* the First Adam as father, mankind is trapped into a fallen father-based structure, so *in* the Final Adam, new mankind has found true liberty and direction. Christ took the divided Sinai and non-Sinai strands, and made them into a new covenant family (Eph.2:11-22), thus making a new father-

[235] "Κατοικεω/*Katoikeō* signifies to 'settle down' and is different from παροικεω/*paroikeō*, to 'sojourn'" (O'Brien 259n).

based structure or entity, the church. Each local church[236] and each Christian should reflect God's fatherhood.

And as to us individually, we who are fathers should reflect our father within our own families. Yet as C S Lewis said, compared to masculinity itself, whether male or female we are all as feminine. And we are all derivative and reduced, streams, not source. Although beyond Paul's wordplay in this context, motherhood too springs from God the father, so reflects him even though fatherhood is the predominant picture. As has been said, Paul and his team acted in both feminine and masculine ways (see 1 Ths.2:7,11).

Public norms count

As we seek to glorify the father, to reflect and radiate his glory, so our earthly relationships need to fit certain standards. Onesimus remained a Christian slave to Philemon his Christian master, though spiritually they had become equal brothers. Christ was their common focus, and was in both (Col.3:11). Yet at the end of the day their spiritual equality did not exclude functional subordinationism. Roman law maintained some questionable bonds, and manumission was limited by law. Let us look at 1 Cor.11:2-16 and public behaviour.

Simplifying and in line with Eph.5:23, I shall focus here on wives/husbands, within the broader picture of women/men within their households. Within the framework of Gal.3:28, in 1 Cor.11:3 we see that husbands and wives, if Christian, were/are equally liberated to equal spiritual status in praying and prophesying, functions which still draw attention to those who prophesy or pray aloud.

Attention to them should be on the spiritual level, and not carelessly sidetracked from the spiritual by needlessly offensive behaviour. At the end of the day their spiritual equality does not exclude proper household relationships and functional subordinationism. And them overlooking their social inequality could raise social hackles against apologetics and evangelism. To honour, rather than

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[236] There is the global church, and many local churches of it. There are many church denominations; there is no denominational church. Mt.6:18

dishonour, God, Paul preferred Christians to publicly come across as the converse of both madness (1 Cor.14:23) and promiscuity (11:13).

Paul used the much discussed term, κεφαλη/*kephalē*.[237] His sequence (1 Cor.11:3) was not God→Christ→ανηρ/*anēr* (husband)→γυνη/*gunē* (wife), as if top→bottom subordination, and wives were nonsequentially in a middle slot. His main point was perhaps the fitness of respecting top-of-the-table, preeminent, positions. Even as Christ deferred spiritually to God, so women should defer socially to men/husbands if that is the secular norm.

To start, each husband should see that above him is messiah, and respect that position both in his social demeanour and how he treats his wife or wives.[238] Each wife—similarly any single girl or woman—if Christian is a priestess, directly under Christ (Gal.3:28).[239] If as a wife she must respect her husband's position, even if not he himself, both at home and in public, where symbols of respect will vary. As for Christ, he too respected/respects God's position and he himself.

It is possibly that Christian wives and husbands weren't paying enough attention to the social symbols. Paul covered both. But let me focus on wives. Paul's letter was a situational letter, addressing the Roman life situation (*sitz im leben*). There was a fuzzy boundary between home and house church, when wives mixed within the vista of Christian liberty. Wives being spiritually siblings, might have informally ignored veils when church came into their homes, unwisely overlooking that unbelievers and amorous believers might have come as guests (1 Cor.14:23) and misread the signals.

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237 These thoughts generally follow David Garland and are built around the idea that Paul used wordplay, toggling between *kephalē* metaphorically as *prominent partner*—not for *head/authority* (lexically unwarranted, *contra* Grudem) nor for *source* (Adam did not come from Christ)—and *kephalē* literally as one's head-on-shoulders.

238 That Paul lived in a polygamous situation is noted but irrelevant to this book.

239 We are directly under our social authority (the lower: Rm.13:1—a limited mandate), and directly under God (the higher: Ac.4:19). When these direct authorities conflict, we ought to obey the higher.

But when local norms used public veils to symbolise wifely fidelity, how might they have come across if unveiled, and how might God come across if they had just prophesied? Paul's point included respecting one's husband as a metaphorical head, a social head, as part of the chain of respect of respecting Christ, and thus respecting God. There were societal norms for showing either regard or disregard for their metaphorical heads, whether social or spiritual.

In Sinai circles, a woman's shaved head could symbolise a holy vow (covenant virtue);[240] in Roman circles, a woman's shaved head could symbolise prior fornication and adultery (covenant violation). Here Paul's term *nature* (14: φυσις/*phusis*) meant social-nature, not intrinsic nature-nature. Paul reminded these Roman-based women, that Rome reckoned that publicly unveiled literal-heads for wives reflected the shame of adultery, as did literally shaven heads. To paraphrase: *If you wish to appear a sexual violator, why not shave your literal heads; in for a penny, in for a pound?*[241]

Paul also drew from *Genesis* a biblical principle that though together man and woman were man (Gen.5:2), mutually dependent and enriching, yet the psychological societal norm does symbolically prioritise the husband-man to the woman-wife. And both physical and psychological differences are hardwired into us, truths needed for harmony together—there are gender parts and there is gender overlap. Paul first focused paradigmatically on husbands, Adam-like as sire, as before wives, Eve-like as mother. Then he returned to the mutuality of life—we run together *but run differently*.[242]

In principal if not always in practice, each wife is glorious to her husband, and so should seek to respect him even as he should seek, ultimately, to respect God, in whose image they both stand equally. However, in Roman tradition, men draping their literal heads—not with veils but semi-hood-like, with togas pulled up over their heads

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240 Josephus' *Jewish Wars*, 2.15.1.313

241 Needless persecution increased, and conversion decreased, when society misunderstood the gospel. For instance, many Romans, misunderstanding the eucharist, believed Christians to be blood-sucking cannibals.

242 A pattern for couples not always possible, or desirable, in playing out.

and dangling down, was common at pagan sacrifices, a fashion. For Christian husbands, such pagan-signalling within a Christian setting, would show dishonour to Christ.[243] In short, in different ways both Christian men and Christian women could publicly send out the wrong signals, whether social or religious, thus unintentionally shaming Christ and shaming God.

For good measure Paul threw in a somewhat related picture of hair. Roman social-nature had certain expectations of masculine hair being cut short, of feminine hair being left long. When in Rome, why rub Rome up the wrong way (1 Cor.9:20; 11:14)?

Blood ties count

Smail bookended his book on the importance of our social households, a lesson he had to his shame been slow to learn. In truth, neither the spiritual household nor the social, should be underplayed, and understanding God's fatherhood is socially redemptive. Did God not aim to turn the hearts of parents to their children (Lk.1:17)? If a man has children but is a bad father, can he be a good servant of the church (1 Tm.3:4-5)?

Eph.4:16 speaks of a functional subordinationism, where each person within a church plays their part. There is also a functional subordination in the context of every marriage-family member respecting and playing their part, and respecting the place of others, places not socially defined but by society reflected.

Yet households have some elasticity, where inner strengths and weakness may play dynamic parts in the staticity of relations. For instance, should not a rule of thumb among siblings, of younger respecting elder, yield to any higher knowledge or wisdom of a younger, or husband to wife, or father to son? But the goal should be family harmony, and our homes to be havens of learning and discipline as they are meant to be. Yet the greater gift can still be

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[243] I was once asked by a vicar—an honourable evangelical—to remove my warm cap in his cold Anglican church café, only to see him happily chat there to an ex-serviceman who following me in, stood wearing his beret. A difficult one.

yielded up in subordinate respect, such as a daughter helping her mother so far as she is permitted—not a usurpation of status.

Marriage-family rules of thumb were given biblical status. Parents were to love and care for their children; their children were to submit in obedience (Eph.6.4; Col.3.21).[244] The example *par excellence* is the heaven father, and the heavenly son. Husband and wife relationships have similar treatment, such as husbandly non-abusive love (Col.3:19), and wifely submissiveness (18), somewhat mirroring parent to child. Sadly, bitterness can grow where one side plays their part, but the other side does not—thus parents are not to embitter their children by not playing their part, and children are not to antagonise parents by not playing theirs.

I do not hold that Christian parents are to strive for *Christian* children. I do hold that the best Christian evangelism as parents is to excel at good parenting as parenting, not as evangelism. Nor should we as parents assume our children's eventual Christification.

Interestingly in directly tackling separation and divorce, Paul indirectly tackled family salvation. In his days, men usually had more legal *rights*, and sometimes women weren't allowed to divorce. The NT neither teaches divorce as a willy-nilly 'right', nor unfairly treats the sexes *un*equally. A mixed-faith marriage wasn't recommended (1 Cor.7:39—why ask for spiritual conflict?). It was spiritually risky, but it wasn't a sin. But, from a scenario sometimes taken to dissuade from divorce, marriage to a nonbeliever could be positive, since the nonbeliever's closeness to the believer 'sanctified' him/her and any children, in some limited way (14).

The Greek is ἁγιος/*hagios*, usually put as 'sanctified', 'holy', or 'towards God'. Here it simply means that the nonbelieving spouse and children have a privileged closeness to the gospel through a live-in witness. That it gives them ultimate salvation, any guarantee of such, or preferential treatment after death whatsoever, is simply a happy myth (1 Cor.7:16—what applied to spouse applied to offspring).

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244 I suspect that both texts are gender neutral, ie parents and children.

Yet overlooking the principle being equally applied to unbelieving spouses and unbelieving children alike, many hold that if a married person receives Christ, their spouse/children will gain Christian salvation. Well, where there's life, there's hope, so 'keep on praying' is good advice, so long as the desired result isn't taken for granted. Other things being equal, having a Christian as spouse/parent puts their spouse/children in a better position to receive Christ.

By the way, Ac.16:31 was either a specific prophecy about the jailer's family who would also hear the gospel, or given to assure the jailer—probably a believer in Mithraism, a religion that taught that its salvation was for men only—that salvation was also for women and children, who also could believe (that is, welcome) Christ and be saved.

Likewise, Ethnic Israel was *sanctified*—especially close to God. But not all enjoying societal life, took advantage of this closeness to get into spiritual life (eg Mt.8:11-2; Jhn.8:44-5). Paul said both that marriage to a nonbeliever bestowed added blessing on them by proximity, and that that blessing lacked guaranteed take-up: not all non-believers will open their family treasure chest. Paul's words still offer hope but they don't preclude divorce as best option.[245]

Christian breakaways and breakouts

Perhaps having mooted marriage separation and divorce, this is a good place to mention wider kephalē separation—perhaps even divorce.[246] Separation can be biblically justified, I think. In a specific pre-Christian setting applicable in Christian settings, Mt.10:23 offers a principle of fleeing persecution, though suffering persecution might sometimes be the better option, and I have read heartwarming stories where a spouse has ridden out a storm and their spouse been redeemed. Some witnesses must be martyrs.

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245 I've focused on 1 Cor.7:12-6. MEVV Grades: A+ (CEV); B+ (NCV); C+ (NABRE/NIV); C- (CEB); D (ERV/LEB/NRSV); D- (NKJV/NLT).

246 These themes I have covered more in my *Israel's Gone Global*, and Jay E Adam's *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, offers much good and workable biblical direction, though lite on covenant (its parent motif).

Whether Paul advised or simply accepted separation perhaps for spiritual time-out, he did advise not separating unduly long—in a healthy marriage (1 Cor.7:5). Might unhealthy marriages warrant protective longterm separation? Paul considered the case of oppugnant spouses where neither faith nor infidelity divided (10). Jesus taught marriage as lifelong loyalty, and while rendering *parangellō* as *command* might be a bit too strong, it makes good sense when seen as part of v11. If married, stay married, as the lord commanded. If separated, either remain single or reunite.[247]

In short, separation isn't ideal but isn't the real objection: the real objection is replacement-marriage killing off any chance or reunion. After all, after *parangellō* Paul said that remaining separate was an acceptable alternative to reunion. Is 1 Cor.7:11 short of divorce?

Divorce, *if* ***on*** *biblical grounds*, carries no residual obligation to either lifelong celibacy or to marital reunion. Divorce, *if* ***not*** *on biblical grounds*, carries a residual obligation to either lifelong celibacy or to marital reunion. Any obligations are removed if either party breaches celibacy without reunion. Such unrighteousness creates *ex post facto* righteous divorce grounds.[248]

As regards parents to children, let's look at Yeshua. Aged twelve, he had voluntarily attended the temple teaching sessions as some did a year or so before their bar-mitzvah, son of the covenant, ceremony. He had travelled to Jerusalem with a wider community/family group—συνοδια/*sunodia* (Lk.2:44). When it headed for home, perhaps his parents initially assumed that he would be with family friends in the caravan-group. Presumably, no one else had previously been at the temple teach-in on their departure day, and even his parents hadn't assumed that that would be where he was (49).

I assume that he had stayed behind to hone his biblical understanding by what the scholars taught; that he assumed they had much; that he particularly quizzed them on points where he felt

247 And yes, one spouse might have genuine grievances the other should remedy.

248 It grieves me when Hollywood treats all divorces as equally reunion-free, rather than to be divided into allowing/disallowing marriage to another.

they assumed too much. For him it would have been helpful learning time, but when called for he immediately prioritised his parents (51).

This same Jesus, when dying on a cross just outside of Jerusalem in supreme obedience to his heavenly father, nevertheless considered the wellbeing of his earthly mother (Jhn.19:26-7). "Some of us need to be liberated from our parents to be free for God; some of us need to have regard to the claims of our parents as part of the claim of God. Some of us need to make good use of the few years in which it is possible to be the mirrors of the fatherhood of God to our children, so that through the love and order of our homes, they may know his love and the obedience to which he calls them" (Smail 201).

Chapter 13

Our Father's Eschatology

We have looked at Levels of the father as father vis-à-vis humanity. The messianic age in which we live, was the eschatology of the Sinai age. We live in the Last Days, when Yahweh's true temple, the church, has been established, and those seeking Yahweh come together in messiah (Is.2:2; Hos.3:5; Mic.3:5). In these days, God pours out his spirit and prophecy resounds within the church through his son (Ac.2:17; Heb.1:2). And in these last days, anti-Christian opposition opposes God by opposing his son (2 Tm.3:1; 2 Pt.3:3).

As to the negatives, of which may we as Christians not be guilty, they can actually inspire us. For as J N D Kelly put it, Peter predicted such hedonistic ridicule against Christianity: "So far from disconcerting good Christians, the appearance of such people should actually fortify our faith, since it has already been divinely foretold and is indeed sure proof of the approaching End" (Kelly 355). It is understandable however, that some Christians in the C1, rejoicing in the breakthrough of God in majestic power, might have expected all opposition to be put down with a heavy hand.

That such opposition is not finally put down, is because this is an open storm porch of the eschatological kingdom, not the full entrance into its cosmic house. There is an appointed season for the messianic kingdom to grow alongside opposition, and there is a time for its harvest. There is a cosmic plan.

But what I have called the Fourth Level, which now we may call the Eschatological Level, shall come—soon in God's reckoning. In this Level, he shall be the eschatological father.

Eschatological children

In such as Mt.25:31-46, we look beyond the messianic age to the ultimate age, when the church has ended. Who goes in? Although everyone is conceived in God's likeness, to say that this teaching

"cannot refer only to the regenerate" (Lewis 1964:73) needs qualification. And based largely on Jesus' other Gospel references to his brothers and sisters (adelphoi) as being his pre-Christian co-workers (Mt.12:50), Craig Keener dismissed the popular idea that this parable means that all humans are in Jesus' family, in which some sometimes need particular care. Goats need not apply. No kidding.

Likewise, we may dismiss the dispensationalist idea of whole nations being Sheep or Goats according to how in their last few years they have treated ethnic Israelites converted to messiah, Yeshua's *brothers* after allegedly the church having been raptured. Dismissed not least because dispensationalism fails to account for "the shift from the neuter 'nations' to the masculine pronoun, suggesting individual judgement of [each nation's citizens]" (Keener 604). Keener argued that Matthew's context meant that the people of *all* nations (thus secularising ethnic Israel) would be judged by whether or not they sided with Yeshua's suffering witnesses/worshippers (605).

At one stage I thought that some of the redeemed, Christians, would be recategorized according to their actions/inactions. If out of three suffering missionaries I help only two, will I remain a heaven-bound Sheep? If I help only one, will I become a hell-bound Goat?

No, it is not the case that one pro-Christian deed grants heaven to any, or that one anti-Christian deed grants hell to any, or that whether Christians or not, we are judged on a balance of pro-Christian versus anti-Christian deeds. And would some deeds weigh more than others? No, it is the case that such responses to Christians in need, evidences constant core attitude to Christ.

What I now think likely is this:

- Some non-Christians, if they meet and understand Christians, will be warm towards them—showing themselves to be Sheep.
- Some non-Christians, if they meet and understand Christians, will be cold towards them—showing themselves to be Goats.

Genuine contact with genuine Christians functions as a litmus test. In short, non-Christians with some warmth towards God—which presumably would be reflected towards Christ if clearly encountered in his siblings—will be ultimately saved by grace based on their hearts to God. Was Emeth a Sheep (C S Lewis' *The Last Battle*)? Was

Gamaliel a Sheep (Ac.5:34)? This teaching about spiritual Gentiles attitudinally divided between Sheep and Goat hearts, might have contributed to Peter not bothering until pushed, to extend evangelism towards the ethnic Gentiles. After all, why invite them into the messianic community, when ultimately God the father would separate them according to inner criterion, and share the inheritance with them then? Why offer them kingdom-now?

With Christ's return, ultimate separation of humanity throughout human history, will occur. I presume all those who have been aborted will also be divided. On this, incidentally, I reject the notion that either an automatic fail is given to all human beings who die before they can consciously choose—the once popular idea—or the converse—the now popular idea—that an automatic pass is given to all human beings who die before they can consciously choose.

- Not to allow salvation before a conversion age, is favouritism against those who die too soon—they don't live long enough to be saved.
- Not to allow damnation before a conversion age, is favouritism against those who don't die too soon—they live long enough to be damned.

God rejects favouritism (Ac.10:34; Rm.2:11). Nor do I accept that third-parties can make a scrap of difference, whether by baptism rites or by sanctification. I accept the idea, Bearable Hell, long held within the church, in which those with a constant core rejection of God will be allowed their inner choice and not forced to endure heaven: they will live as they are at heart, a Goat life unbearable to Sheep.

On the other hand, the eschatological Sheep, the eschatological children, will know and love God forever. Might this include children of other worlds? Many assume not. That's far too little too soon. Some sing Larry Norman's *U.F.O.* song, assuming that any creational children of other planets will have known Jesus visit and die to save their souls. That's far too much far too soon.

Some critics assume that Christians have a parochial *god*, and condemn Christianity out of hand for ignoring conjectured alien species. C S Lewis responded: "...we might find a race which, like ours, contained both good and bad. And we might find that for them, as for

us, something had been done: that at some point in their history some great interference for the better, believed by some of them to be supernatural, had been recorded, and that its effects, though often impeded and perverted, were still alive among them. It need not, as far as I can see, have conformed to the pattern of Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection. God may have other ways—how should I be able to imagine them?—of redeeming a lost world. And Redemption in that alien mode might not be easily recognizable by our missionaries, let alone by our atheists" (Lewis 1981:175). "Our loyalty is due not to our species but to God." Like Christians, perhaps many extraterrestrials "are [also] our real brothers and sisters even if they have shells or tusks. It is the spiritual, not biological, kinship that counts" (Lewis 1975:93).

Indeed, Lewis suggested that other planets might be unfallen, but if fallen that atonement per planet might be unneeded. For even as an act in the C1 Middle East covered people beyond the Middle East both before and after the C1, so might the atonement on Earth cover species beyond Earth and before and after the event—extraterrestrial redemption. "But all this is in the realm of fantastic speculation. We are trying to cross a bridge, not only before we come to it, but even before we know there is a river that needs bridging" (176).

Our father in heaven

Revelation gives us some insight into what is to come. "Bear in mind that *Revelation* focuses on the black and white of the drama, not the grey or multi-coloured reality in-between. In reality, many Christians are not persecuted, and many non-Christians don't persecute" (Hakes 2022:37). Thus, it does not exclude non-Christians *per se* from heaven. How could it, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will sit at that table (Mt.8:11)? They were neither Christians nor Jews.

Revelation covering the messianic age, looks into heaven (4:1,5-6). But how was the word *heaven* used here? It can be used in various ways. For example, it's God's home (3:12); it's the sky at night (6:13); it's the angelic sphere (12:7); it's earthly limitation (21:1). Here heaven's focus is God the father as being the ultimate authority. This

does not mean that any evil deed has been done by his active will,[249] but it does mean that he allows evil the scope to do evil: a supreme commander might willingly allow their enemy scope in certain ways. Besides, there is a big freedom issue of allowing people personal choice even to follow an evil tyrant.

The father is the final goal of the son. *Revelation* features the king of kings who sits upon the throne, *and* the Slain yet Warrior Lamb. The Lamb, presented in various ways, shares something of the king of kings' royalty. The Lamb carries out God's judgements, and those judgements are based on relationships to the Lamb. The world of mankind will eventually be judged by Jesus (Ac.17:31).

And the father, being the ultimate authority, is also seen in the eschatological age. A picture around the end of this writing, speaks of the river of life. That was meant to have Eden spring to mind, with many ideas of abundance and peace and joy and light and fellowship. The first Eden came under a curse; the final Eden will be free from any curse.

Before that age, there is a temple (Rv.16:17); after this age, there is no more temple (21:3,22). Temples, even an arboreal temple in Eden, have represented God as holy intermediaries between him and man. Looking into the post-temple age, the script maintains the priority of "God and the Lamb" (22:3)—but not forgetting the spirit.

And God the father shall wipe away all our tears (Rv.21:4). Some would expect that to be a sweet Jesus, or a mothering spirit, or anyone but an angry distant father. May they learn better in mortal days. On the subject of tears, I was much moved when reading *A Severe Mercy*. Sheldon told how he came home to find his wife

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[249] God is semi-interventional, and his sovereignty is as three overlapping circles. His will can be 1# Active (directly intervening in creation: some plans are fixed; some are fluid), 2# Allowable (creation has scope for interdependency), and 3# Advisory (he advises through such as Scripture; the spirit; indirectly conscience; indirectly common sense). My *Prayer's Gone Global*, ch.6, covers this more. As Horace said, *Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit*: When God's miraculous power is needed, seek the extraordinary; when not needed, seek the ordinary.

flooded in tears: "She clung to me desperately and wept… shaken to the depths, shaken as I had never known her to be", unable for a while to talk. The heinousness of her sins had hit her out of the blue. "Not one person had she murdered, nor one gold ingot stolen. No unfaithfulness, no secret drinking, no dishonesty, no sloth, no kicking dogs. But sometimes she had been grouchy or snappish. She had said cruel things to people, perhaps to her mother or brother" (Vanauken 67-8). Later she, then he, converted to Christ from paganism. We too can weep. "Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people" (NIV: Jr.9:1). Our father shall wipe away every tear from our eyes.

And is sin, which inevitably leads to death, to severance, not the cause of unhappy tears? I heard in my youth about three peas in a pod, a helpful mnemonic to help us remember that in Christ we…

- have been saved from the Penalty of sin;
- are being saved from the Power of sin;
- shall be saved from the Presence of sin.

Of course, some qualifications are needed. For instance, some sins towards others might obligate payment of penalties to them; we must play our part in avoiding and resisting temptation to sin; ultimately Christianity will not have been the only route to God, though is the only route of assurance of God.

As said above, the term heaven has a number of meanings. Ultimately, I think its meaning is not of a place, as if we could theoretically travel there by spacecraft. That's the kind of nonsense that perhaps Nikita Khrushchev spouted, when assuming that cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin hadn't met God in space, he claimed that the idea, God, lacked reality. Ironically, since Earth is in space and Gagarin was a Christian at that time, Gagarin had met God in space. Those with the seeing eye can see God everywhere.

God is in space because he is immanent, not simply transcendent. And when we read that heaven declares God's glory, I think we have a very real clue to what for us will be heaven. In short, is heaven for us the whole universe, which will hold no fear to those who can roam freely without being harmed by it or harming it, spirits obedient to the father of lights, spirits clothed in immortal bodies?

Heaven here I come[250]

"O resurrection body, young, radiant, vibrant, free / with powers unthought, undreamed of—how rich your joys will be! / Through endless years to marvel, design, create, explore / in resurrection wonder to worship, serve, adore!" (Margaret Clarkson's *In Resurrection Bodies*, 1987, stanza 4).[251] It's weird to sing to a body, especially yours yet to be, but her terms of wonder make the song. The study of aioniology (study about eternity) is looking beyond death's door: "because of the joy awaiting him, [Jesus] endured the cross" (NLT: Heb.12:2).

"...by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life" (NIV: *Jude* 20-1).

What has our father lined up for us? What's his plan? Let's wax Lewisian. C S Lewis touched a little on this: Reepicheep joyously went over the crest of the permanent wave (*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*); to someone who had not died, Aslan pointed out that he himself was in the majority who had died (*The Silver Chair*); at last, all Narnians divided themselves into seeking and finding Aslan, or disappearing into his shadow to be lost in darkness (*The Last Battle*). To those who used the pie-in-the-sky taunt to jeer him out of belief in heaven, Lewis replied that there is either pie in the sky or there is not (Lewis 1972:132).[252] Facts are facts, whether nice or nasty, and we should pursue truth in its own name. Be open to God. Imprisoned in their unbelief, the Black Dwarfs ate decay instead of...pie. God can even give pie to those who seemingly seek it rather than seeking himself the baker—the father's humility.

The heavens declare the glory of God, but let's not be too quick to think of heaven as a bait or bribe. Some seek the glory of marriage and look for someone to marry; some first see someone and then

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250 For this section I have borrowed much from my *Israel's Gone Global*.

251 www.hopepublishing.com/html/main.isx?sitesec=40.2.1.0&hymnID=3236

252 And "if there is not, then Christianity is false, for the doctrine is woven into its whole fabric." Yet that's not to be our aim as if mercenaries (Lewis 1972:132-3). John spoke of our wedding feast in heaven (Rv.19:7)—why not some pie?

yearn to marry them. Both approaches are far different from mercenaries who seek to marry a wealthy person to gain their wealth. In fact, since the heavens declare his glory, to accept God in order to get heaven might not be so much amiss. After all, isn't loving his creation tied in with loving its creator?

In *The Last Battle*, once Emeth (a pagan with the Hebrew name 'truth') had died, he found heaven, but meeting Aslan was wholly a holy surprise. Though now in his true home, his mind was uneasy. He had consciously sought to please Aslan's enemy, Tash the inexorable, the irresistible. Yet Aslan assured Emeth that Tash was so untruthful that the truthful Emeth, mentally misguided by false teachers, had at heart always sought Tash's enemy, Aslan, and always rejected the demon that Tash really was.

Emeth's heart and head had travelled different paths, and Aslan straightened out the head. We don't always know what we seek, until we find. Heaven is the rightful reward for those who have truly sought God, even if their heads have been misguided. Likewise, the joys of marriage are for those who have truly sought their spouse, even if their heads have been misguided.

And heaven is wonderful. Paul applied some of Isaiah's sentiments to the unimaginable having happened (1 Cor.2:9; Is.52:15; 64:4), namely the opening up of Global Israel, but I think we may extend it into the future unveiling into which John the Seer peered. Let's discount as naive the picture of white clouds populated with little cherubs stroking golden harps, or a gigantic campfire circle of harpists whose only job *ad nauseam* is to praise God who's sat in the middle (Rv.5:8 and 15:2 are more Picasso than Photo-realistic). We're not going anywhere; we're not learning anything…boring. I think of the *A Little Princess* (1995) film: Lavinia's harp and boredom, versus Sarah's fun and joy! If the harp is heaven's best, well, God could do better.

J R R Tolkien reminded us that those created in the creator's image are subcreators, so if our imagination can do better yet at best is a mere shadow to God's, his surprise for us must indeed far exceed our wildest imagination. In *The Silver Chair*, Puddleglum faces the idea that perhaps his belief in Narnia is a mere child's imagination. Yet, says he to the queen whose sweet magic seeks (like Political Correctivism and 'shame on you' lobbies) to overcome better sense, it's better dying for

that imagination than living in her unimaginably dark and dreary kingdom. An eternal camp singsong to an eternal egotist? No thanks. *Revelation* has broader imagery—city, river, etc. Let's explore its city, its river, their source! Its aim is to be suggestive of deeper realities. Literalism isn't the endgame.

The word *heaven* covers a number of concepts. For example, it's Earth's sky (Gen.7:11), it's the cosmos (Ps.8:3), metaphorically it's God's home (Rm.1:18; 1 Cor.15:47)—though philosophically speaking he *is* his home, our ultimate surround. We are each a soul integrated with our body. Jesus rose with his physical transformed body to maintain his physical connection with us—so where is he physically now? Surely neither in a space suit nor flown to some class M planet!

Sci-fi, often uneasy with Christianity, plays with the idea of phasing between dimensions, and might sometimes have more truth than it knows. What begins in time and space must continue in time and space—but has space hidden dimensions, like a mansion has many rooms? The apostles hid behind sealed doors. Did Jesus pass through those doors by *phasing* his physical body? We are scheduled to become as Jesus is.[253] Perhaps our glorified physical bodies will be under the protection and use of our spirits made perfect under the father of spirits? Bodies immortal, able to eat and drink for pleasure, not for need? Glorified, Jesus was still able to eat and drink. Enjoyment value, not survival value. Exploring eternity is part of exploring salvation.

Job is something of a detective story. The big question was why such a good man had such terrible suffering. Unlike his readers he didn't see the first act, which showed that at one level Yahweh possibly sought to teach the satan, humanity's ultimate sceptic, that humans were capable of unselfish loyalty. Yahweh allowed the common calamities of life to reach Job. Many contemporaries of Job asked the same basic question—should deities be worshipped purely for advantage and protection? And what if deities, far from benefitting us, allowed or sent overwhelming suffering? Is suicide not the logical escape (curse God and die)?

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[253] This is not Mormonism. It is limited to the carnate Christ.

The dialogues carry certain presuppositions, teasing out whether or not only sin leads to suffering, and whether the depth of suffering matches the depth of sin. If the man wasn't at fault, was the deity at fault? Surely Yahweh wasn't a cosmic sadist? In fact the satan was. Job finally bowed to overwhelming wisdom with a "your will be done", and the drama ended with superabundant blessings for him and humble pie for his well-intentioned friends who hadn't understood God well enough to help Job. Job was blest to meditate on wonders concealed from his peers, and some of these wonders we can enjoy by scientific instruments. And what if one day we will enjoy them better, without instruments? Does that superabundant glory await us? Job was encouraged to think about the microscopic (38:22), the ornithological (41), the astronomical (31), and the mathematical (33). Clues, I think, to heaven.

But isn't nature to be destroyed? As we've seen, "...the day of the lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (NKJV: 2 Pt.3:10). Reformationism isn't as happy as Lutheranism to take this as being literal, perhaps being more nature affirming. The Bible speaks of removing the dross, burning the fields of weeds for a fresh start.

Yet it's as Smalley said of such talk in Rv.21:1, "the removal of the sea does not mean that the physical universe has been completely destroyed, but rather that it has been completely transformed, and that there is now no threat from Satan" (524).[254] And Isaac Watts sang of thorns no longer infesting the ground: *No more need sin and sorrow grow / Nor thorns infest our ground / He came to make / God's blessings flow / Far as the curse was found / Far as the curse was found / Far as, far as, the curse was found* (*Joy to the World*). Scripture affirms the universe to continue and to be glorified (Rm.8:20-1), so that I think that 2 Pt.3:10/Rv.21:1 speak poetically of corrupt governance and unfair society ending. The old washed away like at the Noahic Flood, but with a new and blessèd intoxication to follow.

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254 *Sea* had long carried the idea of chaos and mythological horrors.

Our father is still the father of the animal kingdom. It will, I suspect, continue in some way liberated from the impact of sinful man, and Paul poetically spoke of it looking forward to new management, not maelstrom. The psalmists, rejoicing in the shining stars, were awed that Yahweh cared far more for mankind than for stars (Ps.8), a destiny that Jesus began to unfold as the first of the new humanity (Heb.2:8-9). [255] Glorified, Jesus could shift between dimensions, ignoring walls, yet eating food (Lk.24:36,42-3). Is space God's universal playground? In *Out of the Silent Planet* (C S Lewis), Ransom felt surrounded by life—what we call angels—in Deep Heaven, once he left our silent planet. Decontamination makes room for true joy.

I'm not against the planet of my birth (Earth), nor the town of my birth (Stafford). I have long left that town, but can happily revisit. Glorified by our heavenly father, will we fly from Mother Earth's nest? Will we planet hop, star hop through space, captaining our glorified bodies, safe from harm to revel in exploring both God's creation and God the creator? Glorified eyesight, glorified hearing, seeing in infrared the 'snowflakes' of other worlds, hearing the whale songs of other planets, feeling the pulse of quasars? Will we be at liberty to phase in and out with dimensions we cannot yet see or touch? Will we hover over universal history without TARDIS or Internet? It's a mighty big universe, but then, we'd love a mighty big playground, an unlimited adventure park.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Legolas is able to adjust the curvature of his eyes to focus them as binoculars. Will we not have more control over our physical bodies, once glorified? Will we not be able to communicate astronomically without communicators? Will we not be able to adjust our eyes to the telescopic and to the microscopic? Will we not be able to see endless colour combinations beyond 2001's space odyssey? Will we not be able to revel in creaturely life? Will we not be able to behold the inner life of the atoms? To explore the deepest oceans of worlds unexplored, even their very cores? To explore more taste buds than a Ratatouille Rat? To zoom around the

[255] Level 3 salvation is also proleptic of Level 4.

universe without needing protective suits and spacecraft, where kryptonite holds no fears?

Will we not have abilities far beyond that of angels? And will not our spirits, once purified, be able to totally share with one another, redeemed humanity without shame or fear—oh what release and what joy! Earth is a wonderful planet. It's so anthropic that some atheistic scientists even create a multiverse in their imaginations to blind their followers from the idea that Earth seems rather God-shaped for man to live and to thrive. Our planet is so amazing within the amazing universe. Will we be confined to one planet? I think not. Amazement awaits beyond death when we meet our risen lord, who has bodily gone where no man, no human, has gone before.

In a local graveyard somebody—perhaps pompously selfish—put a plaque that boasted that if possible they'd drag the deceased kicking and screaming back from heaven to this woe begotten world—shades of Persephonē. They thought that would be love! Did their boast imagine that heaven was hell and hell (or this fallen world) was heaven? One feels for Lazarus, the proto-martyr who was summoned back to this unhappy sod only to die yet again.

With a Pickwickian smile, we tell the youngster that if we could we would drag them back from their happy holiday camp and friends, back into dull old school where many are bullies. Good heavens! *Romans* teaches that death opens up new possibilities. To die is not to pick up where we left off, nor to clamour for the former times.

Graves that speak of reunions speak of folly. "Unless, of course, you can literally believe all that stuff about family reunions 'on the further shore', pictured in entirely earthly terms. But that is all unscriptural, all out of bad hymns and lithographs. There's not a word of it in the Bible. And it rings false. We know it couldn't be like that. Reality never repeats. The exact same thing is never taken away and given back. How well the spiritualists bait their hook! 'Things on this side are not so different after all.' There are cigars in heaven. For that is what we should all like. The happy past restored." (Lewis 1966:23)

The ancient Sadducees had a standard rubbishing of resurrection: it would be both silly and turning the biblical law of levirate marriage into an eternal sin, if a woman widowed more than once had all her

husbands restored after death (Mk.12:18-23)—eternal polyandry![256] Jesus scoffed their conclusion by denying their premise that spouses were reunited as spouses. Relationship links—be it of parents, spouses, offspring, friends, or enemies—all perish on death. One who has died a father no longer stands in that relationship—they have been retired from the job and if redeemed will enjoy richer nonbiological relationships: she who was my mother is no longer my mother but simply a heavenly sister who I guess I'll bump into.

From family trees the redeemed fly free, disencumbered. The joys and trials of earthly life have helped shape them, but have been preliminary, at best anticipations of true life, true relationships, true unity, true human society. Beyond this life of shame, honour, regrets, loves, failures, and satisfaction, disinhibited we shall share our joys and insights with each other, beyond mere speech, of God's goodness, of God. No longer hiding ourselves, disinhibition shall be a gift from God, as we stop to chat with one another, ranging the wonderful universe.

The universe is our father's. What better medium to explore and enjoy for eternity, feeling his vibrancy throughout time and space, as the fish feels always its watery surround as it moves through underwater marvels. Thus always worshipping; thus supremely worshipping. In the music of heaven, perhaps the imagery of harps meets reality. Our fascination will be the harps. Life will have moved from talk to song, from the prosaic to the poetic, to infinity and beyond. With a nod to C12 Bernard of Clairvaux's *Jesu dulcis memoria*: "Father, our deepest joy are you / As you our prize will be / Father you are our glory true / and in eternity."

[256] For its part, Islam happy touts eternal polygyny as rewarding virtuous men.

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Books by this Author

Theology

Israel's Gone Global

Israel's Gone Global traces salvation through the term, Israel. Was the covenant with the people-nation of Yakob-Yisrael, crossed out? How eternal is covenant? To examine that, we examine marriage. Can a covenant partner be truly divorced? Has Yeshua-Yisrael mediated a spiritual covenant with a spiritual Israel? Is evangelism of ethnic Jews needless, a priority, or neither?

No one could have everlasting life but for the cross, but has it always been globally accessible? Might any who die as Atheists, Hindus, or Islamists, make heaven? And is eternal life joyful? Is everlasting life fun?

Tackling the question of people who die in infancy (or as adults who never heard the gospel), we consider whether it is fair if only those who don't die in infancy get a chance of eternal damnation (if infant universalism), or alone get a chance of eternal heaven (if infant damnation). Does predilectionism make best sense of biblical revelation?

Opportunities to enjoy eternal life spring from the new covenant—reasons to rejoice. But what about salvation history before that covenant?

∞

Singing's Gone Global

Singing's Gone Global, briefly explores the background of singing, before and into ancient Israel. It examines the impact songs have on those who sing, and on those who listen, touching on spiritual warfare. It looks at how nonsense songs neither make sense to evangelism, nor to the evangelised, and asks, "Is there a mûmak in the room?"

Oddly some songwriters simply misunderstand prayer. Part two covers the basics of the trinity, focusing on the spirit in order to understand types of prayer (eg request, gratitude, adoration, chat), leading

in turn to a better understanding of our heavenly father, our brother, our helper, and ourselves in Christ's likeness.

Next we look at some common problems. Part three focuses on problems such as buddyism, decontextualising, misvisualisation, and unitarianism. Diagnosis can help Christ's 'bride' to recover from suboptimal and unbiblical songs (Eph.5:18-30).

Giving a Problem Avoidance Grade (PAG)—an A+ to Unsatisfactory scale—in part four we examine specific songs. Weapons forged (Part three), the mûmakil can be attacked, seeking to save and be saved.

Subsequently the book concludes by showing how Christmas carols may be tweaked to better serve our weary world, rejoicing that joy to the world has come.

∞

The Word's Gone Global

The Word's Gone Global, examines Bible text (trusted by early Islam) and introduces textual critique. It looks at the Eastern Orthodox Bible and the Latin Vulgate. Did the Reformation improve text and translation? Were Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Martin, helpful?

Why did the New International Version begin, and why does it enrage? Why did complementarians Don Carson and Wayne Grudem, clash? Is marketing hype between formal and functional equivalence, meaningless? Which version or versions should you regularly read?

In English-speaking circles, Broughton wished to burn Bancroft's King James Version, yet many KJV proponents—think Gail Riplinger and Peter Ruckman—wish to burn all alternatives. More heat than light?

Grade Charts cover 30+ English versions on issues such as God's name, God's son's deity, marriage, gender terms, anti-polytheism, and various issues in John's Gospel. No, Tyndale was not 'born again'. No, John was not antisemitic. No, he did not disagree with the other Gospels.

∞

Prayer's Gone Global

Prayer's Gone Global, begins with ancient civilisations and prayer (the Common Level). Then it narrows into Ancient Israel and prayer (the Sinai Level). Then it deepens and widens into Global Israel and prayer (the Christian Level). Deity is revealed as trinity: Sabellians mislead.

Relating to the trinity includes the Holy Spirit. We should of course work with him, but should we worship him, complain to him, chat with him? Above the spirit stands the often forgotten father—oh let Jesusism retire.

Authority is another issue. Are we authorised to decree and declare? Is binding and loosing actually prayer, or is it evangelism? Is it biblical never to command miracles? Do we miss out on the supernatural which Jesus modelled for us, too fearful of strange fire to offer holy fire?

You can freshen up your prayer life—ride the blessed camel, not the gnats. Listen to Saint Anselm pray, and C S Lewis and 'Malcolm' discuss prayer, and be blessed.

∞

Revelation's Gone Global

Revelation's Gone Global, is a telling of John's future, as if by a then contemporary named Sonafets speaking to his church about how John's apocalyptic scroll related to their days, and about what was still future to John.

Encouragement is a big theme. Roman persecution was an unpredictable beast which ferociously lashed out here and there—what church or Christian was safe? But God stood behind the scenes, allowing but limiting their enemy, and messiah walked among the churches, lights to the world.

Victory lay neither with Rome nor demons, but with God, and with the warrior lamb who had been slain. Victory was guaranteed, and would finally be enjoyed.

Exhortation was given to believers, to play their part while on the mortal stage. They were to walk in the light, and not to let the show down by straying.

Angels of power, actively working out God's will, far exceed the puny forces against God and his church. His wrath was not pleasant, but could be redemptive until the new age begins.

C S Lewis' essay, The World's Last Night, is briefly examined to enjoin a calm awareness of the ongoing battle we are in, and the brightness to come when the king returns.

∞

The Father's Gone Global

Focusing from God as father, to the specific person of God the father, The Father's Gone Global looks at the biblical parent/child pattern from Genesis, through Sinai, and into the Church.

Abba as a new covenant word expresses deep filial affection even under deep anguish in our Gethsemane battles. Coming through God's belovèd son, it speaks into the church and into our lives.

Though to many the 'forgotten father', human parents/fathers should 'put on' God the father, and his children should 'put on' his son. We forget him to our cost.

Human applications aside, what is the Eternal Society? Is filial relationship modelled by God the son incarnate? Are we to be always obedient to our father and guided by the spirit?

Eschatologically the father will be supreme, but even now he is the one to whom the son points. Christian life should relate to God our father, God our brother, and God our helper, prioritising the father.

Renewal of the church is vital for our confused world, but renewal which downplays the father falls short of the good news which Christ created and the spirit circulates. May this book play its part.

∞

Salvation Now and Life Beyond

Salvation Now, divides the doctrine of salvation into the four main levels of common humanity, the old covenant, the new covenant, and life beyond.

A big weight is put on the term, Israel, as God's master plan. This too has four levels, meaning a man, a people, a new man, and a new people, respectively.

Various ideas of what Christianity, the new covenant for the new people, is good for, and how we get into it and best enjoy it, are examined, and a faith-based inexclusivism is suggested.

Everlasting life is seen as the ultimate goal of salvation, universal meaningfulness and love beyond all fears and pains.

∞

Revisiting

Revisiting The Challenging Counterfeit

Revisiting The Challenging Counterfeit, is an extended review of Raphael Gasson's 'The Challenging Counterfeit' (1966). Raphael was an ethnic Jew whose spiritual journey included many years as a Christian Spiritualist minister.

Today, when psychic phenomena captures the imagination and the bank accounts of popular media, it is useful to unearth the witness of one who had well worn the T-shirt of a medium with pride, only to bury it in unholy ground as a thing of shame and of sorrow and of wasted time.

Challengingly, his book exposes what true Spiritualism is. He had nothing but high praise for Spiritualists, and deep condemnation for Spiritualism. For he had discovered true Spiritualism to be itself a fake of true Spirituality, a mere Counterfeit that, in deposing death in the mind, enthroned it in the soul.

Counterfeit phenomena covered include apparitions, Rescue Work and haunted houses, materialisation of pets, psychic healing, Lyceums, clairvoyance, and OOBEs—to name but a few. This book surveys his exposé of Spiritualism's offer of fascinating fish bait, false food falling short of real food for the soul. Though it takes issue with

Raphael on a number of points, his core insights are powerful and timely, helping us to avoid—or escape from—a Challenging Counterfeit, and to discover true spiritual currency.

∞

Revisiting The Pilgrim's Progress

Revisiting The Pilgrim's Progress, is a re-dreaming of John Bunyan's most famous dream. An ex-serviceman and ex-jailbird, he found fortune, freedom, and fans worldwide.

This dream journey is substantially Bunyan's from this world, and into that which is to come. It is not a fun story, but it has lots of danger, and joy, and reflection on some big life themes.

Profoundly, sinners who become pilgrims become saints. But that can make life more difficult. One big question is, Is it worth it? One big temptation is, Turn back or turn aside. And if you see others do so, that makes it harder not to. Bunyan was tempted. And he discovered that not deserting, can lead to despair. But he also discovered a key to liberty.

Pre-eminently, it is a story of grace which many follow. Grace begins the journey, helps along the way, and brings the story to a happily ever after. Are all fairy stories based on heaven?

∞

Fantasy

The Simbolinian Files

From Simboliniad, a crystal planet long gone, came the vampire race, the wapierze, thelodynamic shapeshifters seeking blood. Most oppose Usen, King of the Light, so side with the Necros. Seldom do the Guardians intervene. These files, secretly secured from various insider sources, reveal something of what they have done, and will do.

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Vampire Redemption

Artificial intelligence, created by superpowers to save man, questions man's worth, and becomes The Beast. Escaping into the wild, many discover a wilderness infested by zombies and diabolical spirits. Who will help? Father Doyle? He's tied up with the

mysterious Lilith. Tariq? He's tied up with Wilma. Can the bigoted old exorcist deliver him from evil?

Radical problems can require radical solutions. But does man really need hobs, elves, and the more ancient of days? In the surrounding shadows, vampires and demons form an alliance, raising the stakes against Whitby and Tyneside. Powerful vampires live shrouded within Whitby, speaking of life beyond this galaxy. Is salvation in the stars? Is Sunniva, the despised woman of Alban, worth dying for? Big questions, needing big answers. Not even Guardian Odin can foretell man's fate and, as silent stars go by, one little town must awake from its dreams.

Though The Beast slumbers purposeless and undisturbed, in the far west a global giant slowly opens its yellow eyes and threatens to smother the earth in fire and ice. There is one chance only.

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Vampire Extraction

Bitterly long their imprisoned spirits lay, fast bound to Earth's drowsy decay. To the Simbolinian race, there was no hell on Earth, for Earth was hell, and Usen the cosmic jailer. Was it so surprising that as vampires they stalked Usen's children for blood? Most chose the Kingdom of Night, wary of both the Kingdom of Necros and the Kingdom of Dawn.

As queen of the Night, Lilith's story streams through the summer sands of Sumer, and through the green woods of Sherwood. It flags up both dishonour and joy, and cuts across the paths of Ulrica the Saxon and Robin the Hood, as tyrannies rise and fall in merry England. Bigotry seldom has a good word to say about Usen, nor about mercy. Reluctantly, Lilith examines what it means to show mercy, to show weakness. Wulfgar had enslaved Ulrica: is it mercy to let her burn; should mercy have spared Lona? Could Hamashiach turn daughter into sister? Could Count Dracula be turned from his madness? Has Draven really betrayed his mother? Life has many questions.

Tales picture ideas, letting us walk through the eyes of others to better see ourselves. This story exposes subplots behind common history. How these chronicles came to be written up is, in the spirit

confidentiality, not for the public eye. What truth is within you must judge. Discrimination is a gift from Beyond, from which the words still echo: mercy is better than sacrifice. Indeed mercy can be sacrifice. Judge well.

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Vampire Count

Vampires were not always earthbound, nor are all evil, but being victims of Usen's Eighth Law, his Children became their fair game. Yet the Night Kingdom was divided: some veered to the Necros; some to the Dawn. Who was wrong; who was right?

Long ago one incited his people to racial violence against elven and human kinds. Ever he strove to be king of the Night, and unto Necuratu the Dark Lord he gave the dragon shape. He made war upon the ancient Middle East, even the Nephilim War. Against him the Light raised flood and division.

At last his own people, paying the price of his rampage, bound him in deep sleep. Yet the millennia seemed meaningless to him: even the rising of Hamashiach hardly disturbed his dreams. At last awoken, he and his brides stalked the hills of Transylvania. Only the fear of Lilith—and after her unforgivable sin, Queen Rangda—chained their bloodlust.

Dracula sought escape and autonomy. By cunning and devious means, he immigrated to London via Whitby. Pursuit followed swiftly, with a shadowminder helping a circle of human headhunters, though they sought the death of all vampires.

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Vampire Grail

Wulfgar is a vampire, a thelodynamic creature from another galaxy, now locked into our world by one called the Cosmic Jailer. He hides a tormenting secret from his queen, Lilith, which the Necros use as blackmail. She will only go so far with the Necros against Hamashiach—Wulfgar must go further.

Unknown to the Darkness, to bury Hamashiach is to plant the Light. From the buried seed springs life, and humanity must reimagine itself. Longinus turns to The Way, the nexus of the Seventh Age. His

spear goes on a special mission to the island of Briton, where Wulfgar lives again.

Logres is centred on Avalon, but raises up Arthur, a man of mixed race, to carry its flag and to protect against the Saxons. But its main enemy is the Darkness, which ever seeks to extinguish the Light it hates and fears.

Finally, it seems as if the Darkness has won, and the dark ages descend. But does the Light not shine in the Darkness? Must Wulfgar remain in the Night?

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Vampire Shadows

Dark vampires, hidden within the ancient empire of Khem, fall out with the king who, stirred up by the Necros, enslaves the Sheep People. But Iahveh, the shepherd-divinity, is stirred up, and stirs up a hidden hero to force a way out.

Apprehensively the two vampire-magicians join the Sheep of Iahveh, on their long and deadly trek in search of a promised land. Can any survive?

Warily they ask deep questions. Is Usen evil, as prejudice says? Is he possibly a good jailer? Are his unusual regulations, meaningful? They risk ending up in death.

Neverendingly the Sheep's sorry story drags out in interminable peregrination. Weary of wandering, most would settle for some green pastures and untroubled waters. But as they well know, that would take a miracle.